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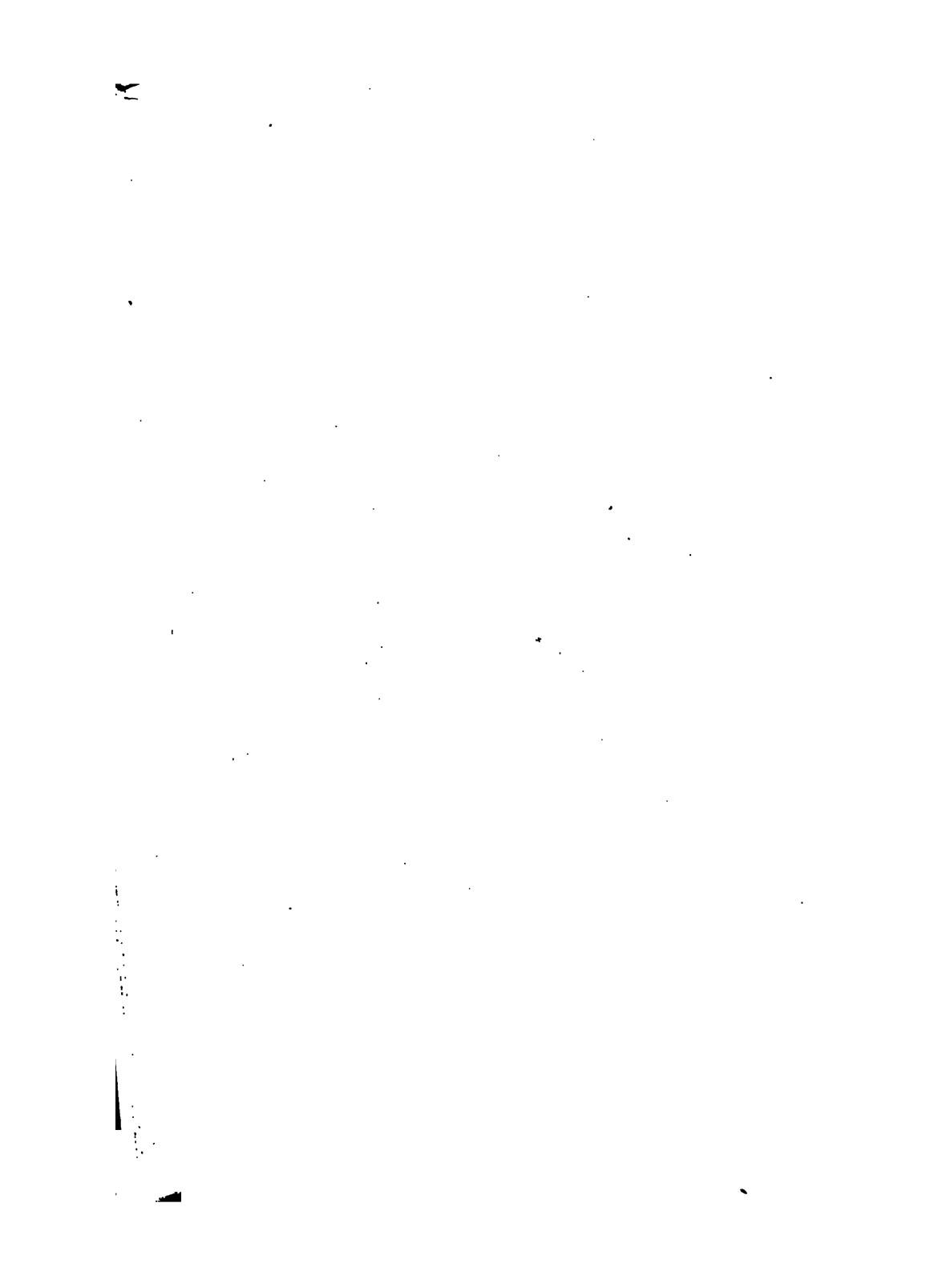


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A GLIMPSE  
OF  
ANDERSONVILLE  
AND  
Other Writings.

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By FRANCIS J. HOSMER.







View from Main Gate, Andersonville.  
ISSUING RATIONS.

©

A GLIMPSE  
OF  
AND  
OTHER WRITINGS.

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BY FRANCIS J. HOSMER.

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Judge Franklin C. Fessenden,  
Boston.

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## **INTRODUCTION.**

The matter contained in this little volume has been previously published. Many calls for parts of it in permanent form has led to this result. Profoundly impressed with the importance of patriotic teaching, I have striven to entertain the young. Finding myself actuated and sustained through a long service in the army by those impulses which were planted and nurtured in my youth, I have hoped to implant in the breast of another a germ of the same flower—it is one of the few whose fragrance grows sweeter with life's declining sun. If I succeed, it is all I hope for and much more than I have reason to expect, but the effort shall be no longer deferred.

I have inserted two half-tone views of the only lot that were ever taken of Andersonville, and they will be of interest. They were made by order of the Confederate War department, by A. J. Riddell of Macon, Ga., on the 17th day of August '64, while I was an inmate. The pictures of my companion and myself, were taken in the uniform in which we were captured.

**THE AUTHOR.**



## ANDERSONVILLE.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE CAPTURE AT REAM STATION JUNE 23D, 1864.—THE ANNIHILATION OF THE 4TH. VERMONT REGIMENT.—TRANSFER TO LIBBY PRISON.—THE MARCH TO DANVILLE.—THE PLAN TO ESCAPE.—THE PERPLEXITIES OF A DULL TABLE KNIFE.—THE HOLE FINALLY CUT IN THE DOOR.—THE JUMP FROM THE TRAIN.—SAFE SO FAR.—BUT WHAT NEXT.—THE NORTH STAR, NOT WHERE IT USED TO BE.—AT LAST IN TOUCH WITH THE INFINITE.

[“Thousands of our boys in blue were prisoners of war and suffered privations, in southern prison pens, that form the darkest chapter in the history of the great rebellion. Occasionally there were attempts at escape, but rarely did these breaks for freedom succeed. The following narrative, which has been written at our request, is the experience of a veteran of Edwin E. Day Post, and will be read with interest.”]

About 6 o'clock p.m., on the 23rd of June, 1864, a small scouting party of about 400 men, of whom the writer was one, was surrounded by Mahone's division and captured while in the act of tearing up the Weldon railroad at Ream Station, about six miles below Petersburg, Va. One hundred and thirty-nine of the number were from the 4th Vermont Regiment and it was substantially all there was left of a regiment, which fifty days before had crossed the Rapidan with about five hundred and fifty men present for duty.

It seemed to be a fit sequel to the history of the old regiment, whose every move on that campaign had brought it one step nearer annihilation. Of that one hundred and thirty-nine men of the 4th Vermont, seventy-one of them never returned, and it was in view of some such probable outcome that I decided at once not to report at Andersonville, if there was any way to prevent it. A few days later that detachment of prisoners was quartered in Libby prison, awaiting orders for transportation south. Hunter at this time had destroyed the bridge at Branchville and made it necessary to proceed via Lynchburgh, and accordingly, on June 30th, the detachment was sent to Lynchburgh and from there required to march to Danville, a distance of sixty miles. On July 2d the column was well under way and while speculation as to our destination was rife among the men, it disclosed the fact that I was not alone in my determination to escape.

Among those most likely to be in earnest in the matter was my old friend H. I. Gorham, a corporal of our company. I think we were each a little surprised at the audacity of our undertaking as we begun to formulate plans, and measure as near as we could the chances of success. Neither was disposed to be rash, but each was willing to take an even chance with death in preference to the hospitality of the Confederate authorities.

We toiled along that sultry road and watched our opportunity both day and night, but the guards were too vigilant. July 4th, the last day of the march, brought us into Danville just at night. Two nights in one of the tobacco warehouses, awaiting transportation, and on the night of the 6th the journey is resumed. About 6 o'clock p. m., a train of cars, consisting of an engine, tender, and one box car at the head, followed by about twenty flat cars, was backed in for its load of prisoners. It happened that my companion and myself, were near the head and were placed in the box car with ninety-three others beside the guards.

The flat cars were quickly loaded, a guard placed on each of the four corners of each car and the relief guard mount to the top of the box car we were in—and the train starts for the

south. The car we were in was in no sense different from the ordinary box car except the doors were made of slats, leaving spaces about three inches wide for ventilation.

The one on the right hand side was fastened on the outside, while the one on the left hand side was open, with two guards occupying it and watching the movements of the prisoners inside. When the train was fairly under way, we began to cast about to see what could be done for freedom. I suppose we worked for three hours to try to cut through the floor with a dull table knife, only to find that the night was not long enough to accomplish it. That was abandoned, and with it I abandoned all hope of escape that night. Not so with my companion, who began at once to work his way through that tangled mat of humanity to explore the other parts of the car.

About an hour later "Jimmy, come over here," rang out rather sharply above the rumble of the train. It was perhaps five minutes later that I stood beside my comrade at the closed door of the car. "You see that hole?" says Gorham, as he drew himself to one side disclosing the absence of three slats in the door, they had cut away. Reader! did you ever long for a blessing so ardently that you began to doubt whether you were worthy of it, and when at last you seemed to come upon it like a special endowment from heaven lying squarely across your path, find yourself wondering whether you really wanted it?

Here was apparently an open road to freedom, if we could elude the guards,—a short cut to the grave if discovered. Our conference was short. The elements were rather favorable, and the hour—it was about midnight—with a clear but moonless sky. It was agreed that Gorham might lead in the movement though each chose the first chance. The plan was to drop by the side of the track, and move up as near to the rail as possible so that the projecting side of the cars would shield us from sight as they passed over us. It was also agreed that if one went both would. Presently Gorham swings out and is lost to sight. As soon as the obstructions will permit, I follow him. Not a shot! The train moves along and out of hearing and we are safe—so far.

In all our discussions upon the subject we had supposed and assumed that if once we could escape from the guard the rest would be easy. We had escaped and we stood—where, we did not know. We supposed some fifty miles south of Danville, in the state of North Carolina, and we were certain that we were at least two hundred miles from any one that we wanted to see. We sat down on the bank of the railroad and discussed our situation. Virginia was the storm center. No use trying to make our way through there. To reach Newberne or Goldsboro we must traverse the most thickly settled portion of North Carolina. We did not care to increase our acquaintance in that direction. Like the Southern confederacy, we only wanted to be let alone. It was finally decided that Tennessee would be more likely to be realized than any other goal we might select, and like the "Star of Empire" we concluded to make our way toward the west. But which way was west? We searched the heavens for the northstar,—no trace: it was not where it used to be. What,—had the Creator deserted us also? There was no other face we dare approach to learn the points of the compass, —and this withheld. There is a condition of the human mind called despair, which of course no soldier could indulge in, but there was a heaviness of heart which might have led into the earlier stages, if at this time we had not discovered the "big dipper." What a relief. A moment before we had stood alone and unarmed among enemies, with only the thin curtain of night to shield us. Now we were in touch with the Infinite. There was His finger and it pointed west. We followed its beneficent warning to the verge of exhaustion, sank upon a dry spot of earth and slept.

The sun was probably two hours high when we awoke. A small morsel of corn bread, saved from the last issue at Danville was all the commissary stores we possessed. That was divided and eaten. Blackberries which were abundant, supplied the rest of the meal. Noon came and found us dining on berries and still growing hungry. Whatever the merits of blackberries as a dessert, we had discovered that as an article of diet they were a dismal failure. Something must be done.

We must find some way to replenish our commissary stores and we must know more of the habits and sentiments of the people we were among. We had taken the safe side and estimated every white face an enemy and every black face an indifferent, or at most, powerless friend. We must secure the information in some way. From that moment our journey became a search to that end.

## CHAPTER II.

THE SHADOW OF A HOUSE.—“WHAT WILL YOU HAVE SIR?”  
YOU BELONG TO THE 18TH DON’T YOU? NO MADAM, I AM AN  
ESCAPED UNION PRISONER. IS THAT SO? GOD BLESS YOU, COME  
IN HERE.—SHALL WE EVER SEE THE OLD FLAG AGAIN?”—THE  
UNION ARMIES ARE HEWING THEIR WAY TOWARD YOU, THEY  
WILL REACH YOU IF YOU LIVE.—THE YADKIN RIVER.—  
MOSQUITOES.

Just before night, as we were wending our way through the forest, we came upon a clearing of perhaps twenty acres. In the opposite corner from where we stood was a house and barn. A blue wreath of smoke arose from the chimney that proceeded from a wood fire: some one lived there. The house was covered with clapboards: the occupants were probably white. Were there any men under that roof, and if so how many? We watched that house till twilight deepened into gloom. A light appears: that fails to settle anything. We had surveyed the premises from all sides and taken our stand behind some trees near the house. No one had appeared and we had concluded that there was no danger lurking there. It was therefore decided to make our presence known and Gorham approaches the door and raps. The door was opened by a lady about forty years of age. “What will you have sir?” she says. “Madam, I am hungry, I wish to procure some food, can I do it here?” “I have nothing for you,” she replies, as she partly closes the door.

Seeing he was inclined to urge his request no further and was about to leave, she says, “You belong to the 18th don’t you?”

"No," he says, "I am an escaped Yankee prisoner." From the nature of her question and its inflection he saw that the 18th she referred to must be the 18th North Carolina, and that she had little sympathy with them, so he concluded to argue the case on its merits at once. "Is that so?" she says "God bless you, come in here." "All right says Gorham, but I have a chum out by the spring." "Well, bring him in too." We were ushered into as loyal home as any to be found in the old Bay State. Was it Virgil who sought in vain for love till he explored the wilds, and there found it a dweller of the rocks?

Here was a humble North Carolina home, consisting of a husband, wife, and invalid sister, at whose door we only hoped to secure a morsel, for which we were still able and expected to pay. What we found was a welcome so warm as to almost suggest a doubt as to its true and real sincerity for several moments. But no, those plain spoken people were not actors: they could only speak from the heart and when they asked, as they did, with tears in their eyes, "What is the chance that we shall ever see the old flag again?" It left no doubt. They said, "We have waited and hoped and prayed, only to have the next papers that come from Richmond leave us in greater doubt. Are the Union armies really making any progress?" We then explained to them the general status of military affairs as we understood it up to the time of our capture, and concluded by assuring them that it was simply a question of length of days and retention of eyesight whether they saw the old flag again. Rest assured the Union armies are hewing their way toward you. They will reach you if you live. It was well along toward morning when we left that "household of faith." We learned that night what it cost to be a Union man in the south.

When we bade our new-found friends adieu it was with their blessing, a full haversack and a much more definite idea of what lay before us. Just before parting, they had assured us that in all cases we could rely implicitly on the colored race. This we afterward found to be absolutely true, and it simplified the ration problem very much.

The Yadkin river lay across our path and not far distant, we

reached its banks as morning was dawning. The river was too deep to wade—too wide to swim—we tried both. We must follow up the bank till we found a boat, wait till night and cross. When we found a boat it was near a settlement and we secreted ourselves in the willows by the waters edge, not far from the path that led down to the boat, there to sleep till night.

Mosquitoes? All there was in the world. At all events if there was any anywhere else we did not try to locate them. We felt as the Irishman did who went to the surgeon of his regiment for a pound of aneguintum. "And what do you want of a pound?" asked the surgeon. "To kill lice soir." "Why Pat, a pound would kill all the lice in the army," "Faith, I have them all soir."

A negro shortly passing down the path, was interviewed, and when he had learned our purpose, he said, "yo come wid me." He led us down the river several rods to where there was another boat, and says, "Dis' my boat; I put yo ober." There were several men in sight and we objected to the risk, not on our account, but on his. We asked him if he understood that he would be hung with a grape vine if discovered? "I reckon so," he said. We entered his boat and he landed us on the opposite side. "Now yo git inter dem woods jes' quick yo can," were his parting words as he shoved off. This was the first time we had an opportunity to test the devotion of the colored race, and this test was at the risk of his life.

The next adventure we had in replenishing our store developed rather unexpectedly. It is true we were on the lookout and had been all the morning, but as there was no pressing need, we passed everything that seemed to indicate risk. We were still in the fertile valley of the Yadkin, and the dwellings were quite numerous, and the general appearance was rather thrifty. We were now for the first time where the open land seemed to be in the majority, and we frequently found it necessary to go much out of our way to keep under cover of the woods. We were proceeding toward what seemed to be an opening ahead, and, approaching it at

its south-east corner, the ground rose toward the west, and a road ran along by the side of the woods in that direction. We reached the road and there discovered, at our right, about five rods distant, beside the road, and at the immediate corner of the clearing, what appeared to be a negro's cabin, up the road and above the hill, what appeared to be the top of a chimney, while in the road just coming over the hill, was a negro whom we supposed lived in the cabin. There was no one else in sight, and when he had come up to where we were standing, (we were still partly under cover of the brush) we spoke to him. Not a look—not a word. The most adroit actor in the world, after weeks of study, could not have surpassed the sang froid of this unlettered friend of the Union as he passed us, and went straight to his cabin. We drew back into the more perfect shelter of the woods, and there we stood two Union soldiers, looking at each other in blank astonishment. What did this mean? We could see nothing that seemed to call for special caution. Had we come upon a colored man who was an exception to the rule? There was no way now but to find out. We moved to where we could get a better view of his cabin. He moved about in the most natural manner, discharging his duties, and his conversation with his family seemed to pertain entirely to them. Presently he started and left his cabin moving off in the opposite direction from where we stood, he soon entered the thicket and was lost to sight. We listened for his footsteps. They grew faint, then stealthy, and we soon saw that he was making his way around to where we stood. "Yo in mighty close quarters here," said he before he had fairly reached us. "My ole massa conscript officer if he see yo, yo gone shore. Come wid me." He led off, probably a mile through the woods, till he reached a point of land overlooking a valley, where stood a mill and several houses. Pointing to a white house which stood near the mill, he said, "Yo go dar"—tell dem who yo is—day take care ob yo—now I mus go." "But, uncle, you say your master is a conscript officer in the confederate service. Tell us is he a pretty bad rebel?" We were thinking of the time when the old flag would have defenders there to look

after such as he. But the ingenuity of the darkey in evading all questions which might criminate his master, awakened at once with me, a veneration for the race which has never changed. Here was a race of four millions of people, entrusted, not only with the care of the family estate, but of the family itself, whose toil alone, must be depended upon to supply the Confederate commissariat, faithfully discharging their duties as servants, while their masters were fighting to make their bonds perpetual.

We approached the house designated, announced our presence and our errand, and were at once invited in and introduced to the family, Mr. and Mrs. Cobb and two young daughters. The table was spread and we were invited to eat. A very pleasant hour was spent with those people. Like our previous acquaintance they were anxious to know what progress the Union armies were making. This family was surrounded with evidences of refinement, such as were not to be met with in most North Carolina homes, judged by our observation. Mr. Cobb proved to be the owner of the mill and was evidently one of the prominent business men of his neighborhood. He had been a resident there for a long time, had watched the development of that sentiment which had culminated in rebellion, and, as he expressed it, knew that it was born in iniquity, and fostered by deceit, and as a result, had no confidence in the dispatches that came from Richmond. We could only assure him that the Union was strong, as it appeared to us, and that at least, there were at that moment, enjoying his hospitality, two of the Union's defenders who had not the slightest doubt of the final result. This seemed to encourage him as his questions brought to light the fact that the judgment was based upon a connection with the army from its organization. He asked who had piloted us to his home. We assured him that it was a colored man, and, that settled, he remarked that the boys knew him pretty well, but that he was obliged to be very cautious. He told of many ways in which the Confederate authorities were trying to entrap such as he, but so far, he had been left to the secret enjoyment of his views and the pursuit of his business.

We left them with an abundant store for several days, and as they scorned the thought of receiving pay, we left them as a souvenir, a silver pocket pencil and gold pen. If any member of the family should chance to see this they may know that their kindness was never forgotten. We bade them good-bye and journeyed toward the setting sun.

### CHAPTER III.

THE BOY'S CANDOR.—"YES SIR I AM A UNION MAN, MY FATHER IS AND MY GRANDPA OVER THERE IS, BUT THERE ARE NOT MANY AROUND HERE."—THE OLD GENTLEMAN'S SUSPICIONS.—DOCTOR BENBOW.—THE MIDNIGHT VISIT.—THE CHANGE OF PLAN.—JOINING SPENCER'S CROWD AT THE MOUTH OF A CAVE.—THE FATHER'S PLAN.—THE FAMILY PARTING.—NOT WORDS—BUT SOBS.—THE GATHERING OF THE REFUGEES.

Our store of provisions lasted us several days, and while it did last there was but slight hinderance to our pursuing our way unobserved.

Our next adventure changed our entire plan. Our rations were running low, we had been looking all day for some way to replenish them. Nothing favorable presented itself till about 2 o'clock p. m., when we heard noises as of some one driving a team. We moved in the direction of the sound, till it brought us to the edge of a clearing, which was largely planted to corn, in the further part of which was an old man plowing out the weeds, while in our immediate front, was a boy, I should judge not over twelve years old with another horse, engaged in the same work. The boy was moving toward us and his rows terminated just in front of where we stood, sheltered by the brush. The little fellow reached the end of his row, turned around and was starting back, when we spoke to him. He seemed somewhat startled at first, but that look quickly disappeared as we plied him with commonplace questions. Finally we asked if there were any Union men near by. The little fellow drew himself up to his full height, cast a furtive glance around and said; "Yes sir, I am

my father is, and my grandpa over there is, but there are not many around here."

The old gentleman had noticed something unusual, stopped his horse and was on his way over. When he came up the boy said; "Grandpa these men ask if there are any Union men about here," and he repeated what he had told us. The old gentleman cast rather a reprobating look upon the boy for his frankness, and proceeded to catechise us. After satisfying himself that we were Union soldiers, he pointed to an old deserted cabin in one corner of the lot and said; "You go down there, make yourselves comfortable and wait. My son will be glad to see you. I expect him here at four o'clock. He is a practicing physician and his name is Henry Benbow." We followed his request and at about the time specified saw the two men approach. Henry Benbow was a man about thirty-eight or forty years of age, about five feet and five inches high, one hundred and thirty pounds weight, of liberal education and intense loyalty. He said; "I can't see you now. Go down into the thicket beyond that corner in the fence, secrete yourselves and remain there until I come. I can't tell when it will be, but it will probably be sometime before morning." He made a peculiar whistle and said; "When you hear that answer it; it will be me."

This was, perhaps, at five o'clock in the afternoon. We sought out the spot designated, arranged our couch of leaves and waited for the signal. It must have been near midnight when we heard it and it brought not only the doctor but one of his neighbors, who was a Confederate conscript officer. We were assured at once that he was harmless. From that time until morning we were answering questions about the condition of our army—the resources and sentiment of our people; in short they wanted a detailed synopsis of the present condition and future prospects of the Union cause from our standpoint. We gave it to them and they seemed cheered.

Before taking his leave that night the doctor said; "There is a man by the name of Johnson who used to peddle tin through this section before the war who knows every path and cross road between here and Tennessee. He has made his

way through the lines and enlisted in the United States' service and has returned and is now about here raising a party to go through to Tennessee under his guidance. They will all be Union men who have been conscripted and refuse to serve and have been in hiding in the woods and caves for months. Johnson is getting them together and they propose to start Thursday night,—this was Tuesday,—If you think favorable I will supply you with rations and put you in communication with them. "It seems to me that will be the best thing you can do." We thanked him for his kindness and accepted his offer. "To-morrow night," he continued "I will come again and give you the same signal and conduct you to some of the people that I know who are going." We had only to wait for the time and our guide to arrive, which he did somewhat earlier than on the first night, and we started at once. I suppose it must have been four or five miles that we followed our guide, mostly through the woods. At last he stopped, gave a peculiar whistle, which was answered, and very soon we were introduced into what was known as "Spencers crowd," which consisted of Mr. Spencer and his three boys and three or four of his neighbors. Mr. Spencer had been in the Confederate service himself, and though a Union man he had found no way to evade it but to desert his family. He thought that the boys could take care of the mother and daughter and if he served in their ranks he thought they ought to be satisfied, but they soon conscripted the three boys the oldest not yet twenty the youngest not yet sixteen, and he at once deserted, gathered his boys around him and they had been, for months, hiding away from the authorities and now they had reached the conclusion that they must leave their home and loved ones and try and make their way through the lines to some spot on loyal soil where they might establish another home, to which they hoped the fates might kindly at last, deliver the mother and daughter.

We had found Mr. Spencer and his friends at the mouth of a cave hidden by a dense wood. The mother and daughter were there to bid the father and brothers good-bye, and the parting of that little group, is still one of the saddest memories

of those four long years of supremely sad events. Driven to the shelter of the woods for their last family meeting, they stand beneath the midnight stars, clasped in a silent embrace,—not words, but sobs. The very presence becomes painful,—we can offer them no comfort and we move slowly forward and leave them. Some philosopher has said that for every breach that death makes in the constitution, nature kindly covers with insensibility. It must likewise be true of those inroads which despair makes upon hope.

The parting comes at last and the Spencers' join us and the gathering of the clan has begun. For a distance of probably fifteen miles, the little band was augmented by accessions at given points, which had been agreed upon as meeting points, and when at last all had reported, there were one hundred and thirty-two, probably about one half of them deserters from the Confederate service and the rest of them men who had been conscripted, but refused to serve and had succeeded in evading the authorities. One man that I recall said he had not slept under a roof for twenty-two months.

Here I was first introduced to sergeant Johnson the leader of the movement, a small sandy complexioned man, in citizens dress, as were all of the others except my companion and myself, we were dressed in full U. S. uniform and wearing the insignia of a sergeant and corporal respectively. I refer to this fact because the sequel was rather unexpected.

The line was formed in military order in the road, and the instructions from Sergeant Johnson were as follows,—every man get a stick about the length of a gun, and carry it at "right shoulder" to give the impression that we are soldiers moving under orders. We will march in the road during the night and under the cover of the woods by day,—make no conversation among yourselves.

This was probably about midnight. Our march until daylight was in the road and at a quickstep. As daylight began to appear we filed into the woods, and kept under cover all day. Near night there was a halt much longer than usual, and inquiry revealed the fact that sergeant Johnson had gone to communicate with a Mr. Wilcox, who was a prominent Union

man and headquarters for the underground telegraph line for Wilkes county. We had learned from the first white man we met, that such an organization existed. Here for the first time we learned the name of one of its prominent members and that the organization was called the "Loyal Legion." It had a crude set of signs, and pass words, and facts of importance to their interest were reported at once at headquarters. Each county in the western part of the state had such a place and it was the home of some prominent Union man.

At last Johnson returns, and the march is resumed. From greater caution, which is observed, it is evident that the news gathered at the Wilcox's occasioned some anxiety, although no definite report gets out among the men. We were south of the Yadkin river and following its windings toward Wilkesboro, the county seat of Wilkes county.

The following day, about three o'clock p. m., as the column was moving along in the edge of a wood, which was thickly studded with blackberry bushes, we came upon two women picking berries. It was hoped, by observing silence, those women would conclude that the men were conscripts moving under orders to report at some point west for arms. Thus we passed them, and felt safe,—but this episode had a sequel which developed a few days later.

The little city of Wilkesboro I should say contained at that time perhaps seventy-five or one hundred souls and is located near the Yadkin river well up under the foot hills of the Blue Ridge. We were nearing it. As the guide knew of no road or path that led around the town, the only plan seemed to be to approach cautiously, as near as possible, secrete ourselves and go through during the night. It was near two o'clock in the morning when we went through. A light shone dimly from a single casement, as though some lone watcher was patiently waiting for the angel of death. With that exception the little hamlet was in darkness, and its dwellers apparently wrapped in slumber. There was no disposition on the part of any one in our party to disturb their repose. When we were fairly through, and beyond all apparent need of restraint, the conversation was resumed, and it was esteemed a matter for

special rejoicing that we had safely passed, probably the most trying spot of our journey.

#### CHAPTER IV.

WILSON'S CREEK.—THE TWO HORSEMEN.—JOHNSON'S DISAPPEARANCE.—UNCLE "BILLY COOK."—"FLAT TOP SWARMING WITH GUARDS."—THE BERRY PICKERS' REVELATION EXPLAINED.—THE VISIT OF MR. COOK,—"THE LAST MORSEL WE HAVE."—"MY WIFE WANTS TO SEE SOME YANKEES."—MR. COOK'S APPLE CELAR.—NO LONGER SAFE.—OUT INTO THE STORM.—THE PRIMEVAL FOREST.—"THE RAIN DROPS FELL FROM A NEW SKY, THEY DRIPPED FROM LEAVES THAT NO MAN OWNED, UPON SOIL, NO FOOT HAD EVER TROD."

Probably six miles beyond Wilkesboro, the road crosses the Yadkin river, by a ford. We reached it early in the day and forded it. The river here was some thirty rods wide and from one to three feet deep. Here the road bears directly west, and immediately enters one of the gorges of the Blue Ridge. Whoever has read "Richardson's Field, Dungeon, and Escape," will find this road very graphically described. It is the one through which he made his way over the mountain. It is very appropriately named, the "Wilson creek road," for the creek disputes the right of way with the road for miles. Wilson's creek probably carried as much water as the Deerfield at its mouth. It apparently, never had a bridge and it changed sides with the road with surprising frequency.

During the afternoon, as the men were toiling along up the mountain, two horsemen approach from the rear and ride along through the column and are lost in the distance beyond.

We had now reached a condition of country where we must follow the paths for there was no progress to be made through the tangled mat of brush and vine, consequently we must take the risk of the road. Were those men spies? A few of the men thought they were, and suggested attempting their capture, but the matter came up and was passed too suddenly to formulate any plan. That night evidence began to thicken,

then every one knew what should have been done, but it was too late.

We were nearing the Watauga county station of the underground railroad and our approach must be cautious. If there are Confederate guards in the mountains they will surely be shadowing that point. It was the home of Uncle Billy Cook as he was called, and it was but few miles distant; the forest is dense we seek a secluded spot and wait. Sergeant Johnson goes to communicate with "Uncle Billy" and that is the last we see of him. We learn later that he discovered the condition, made his way through and escaped.

Mr. Cook himself, searches out our hiding place to inform us that every path on "Flat Top," as the range there is called, is guarded by Confederate soldiers who are informed of our approach. In some way, Mr. Cook had learned that the two women we had passed picking blackberries had, as we had hoped, reported at Wilkesboro having seen soldiers moving westward. This information came to the ears of the quartermaster of the post and he, knowing that Wilkesboro was the outpost of the Confederacy in that direction, all soldiers moving under orders from the C. S. government, must report there for rations. As no one reported, those horsemen had been sent out as spies, and the result was a mounted force was at once sent from Raleigh to Morganton and hurried into the mountain, while the home guards of one hundred men each, were called from five nearest counties and the cordon was complete when we arrived; at least Mr. Cook was so informed and believed.

Here I was first introduced to Mr. Cook. A man of sandy complexion, full beard, about five feet five inches high, one hundred and sixty-five pounds weight, a Baptist deacon, probably fifty-five years of age, of pronounced theological views, and a Union man, who had proclaimed his loyalty from the first, and declared that if the Confederacy compelled him to fight he proposed to commence on his own premises. So far he had been watched, but not molested.

This was midday and Mr. Cook must make haste to return, as he knew his movements were being watched; he only



F. J. HOSMER.  
Jan., 1864.



wanted to locate us so that he might be able to find us during the night. Before going, however, he says : "What have you got to eat, boys ?" When told that the rations were running low he said : "Some of you come with me and I will point out a place where you will find something about daylight to-morrow morning. To-night I will come and see you." During the evening, Mr. Cook came, sought out the two escaped Yankee prisoners and kept us busy until quite late with his questions. He, like all the others we had met, was in serious doubt where matters stood on the Union side, and in fact they knew comparatively nothing of the condition of military matters in the Confederacy. They simply lived and hoped.

The next morning at early dawn, a bag of corn meal was found and divided among the men—with silent thanks for the unknown giver. It was understood that no one was to know where the assistance came from, so that none could inform in case of capture.

The place where we were quartered was considered too much exposed, and we were piloted to a dense thicket of laurel, in what was known as the Story settlement. There we waited for several days, and until Mr. Cook had delivered the last bag of meal of his own, and had secured the last piece of veal from one of his loyal neighbors, and with this last donation he says : " Boys, here is the last we have. We are sorry we can feed you no longer, but we have it not. I see nothing for you to do now, but to break up into small parties and make your way as best you can. Some of you can get through in that way, and some will very likely be caught. But tell nobody that you know me." Before making the announcement, Mr. Cook had spoken to my companion and myself, requesting us to linger in the vicinity after the rest of the party had gone, as he wished to see us further.

A few hours later, Mr. Cook came and found us and said : "Come with me, my wife wants to see some Yankees, and I am going to conduct you around through the woods to a place near my spring, where mother can visit you without arousing suspicion." The spring was probably twenty rods or more from the house. The path that led to it was cut through a

dense mat of laurel; into this we crept and waited. After dark, Mrs. Cook came out to make our acquaintance, bringing a water pail, inside of which was a smaller tin pail filled with such provisions as they had, for our supper. She sat and chatted, much after the fashion of her husband, about the war and its prospects. The same uncertainties, which had shrouded their lives for the past four years, still thick about them and the confederate authorities at that moment, as she knew shadowing her home; she still felt that the end must be bright, for the trials of the Union people had been so severe.

The next day she came again, when, as she expressed it she could see our faces. In recounting the privations which the people of the south had endured, she said they had not had a match in their house, I think, for two years, and it was at least a year since she broke her last needle, and that was really the sorest trial of all. She said: "I have always told my husband that some one would come along and give me another, but no one had ever come." I found a few in my needle case and gave the good woman and was surprised to find that an item so small, should appear of such vital importance to any one.

That night it seemed very much like rain, and after it was dark, Mr. Cook appeared, and led the way to what he called his apple cellar, under his corn barn, where we slept dry and thanked our benefactor. Early in the morning, Mr. Cook came out with our breakfast, and remarked that he had heard the guard around his house all night, and had found their tracks, but no one had molested him.

The morning was cloudy, and soon rain began to fall in heavy volume, and the storm increased until after noon. About nine o'clock, a. m. Mrs. Cook carefully approached our hiding place, and in serious agitation of mind, informed us, that the guards had just been at the house and arrested Mr. Cook; she further said: "I fear you are not safe here." While the danger to us, could in no sense have been greater to be captured on Mr. Cook's premises, rather than elsewhere, we saw at once, the danger to them, if we should be found there, and with a hurried "good-bye" and an earnest "God

bless you," we left those true hearts and hurried out into the storm.

We had no other purpose at starting than to relieve the Cook's of our presence. We had learned from Mr. Cook that every pass on "Flat Top" for ten miles either way was guarded. We supposed the line of guards to be west of where we were. When we had wandered sufficiently far from Mr. Cook's to feel that we had relieved them of our presence, we stopped, to decide upon our course. We reasoned that, if we were still east of the line of the guards, our best way was to remain so, travel toward the south until we were below them, then turn our footsteps west, and in that way go round them.

Up to this time we had thought nothing of the points of the compass. Now it was necessary we should know. We had wandered away from Mr. Cook's premises several miles, and now for the first time began to cast about for something to direct us. The moss upon the trunks of the trees furnished no guide, as it seemed to encircle the entire trunk. The sky was overcast, it was still raining hard. Was there nothing in all that wilderness to help our feeble wits? We stopped and began a critical examination of every thing in sight. No stump that ever felt the pressure of an ax; no fallen tree ever touched by a saw. In all that vast wilderness, within the range of our vision, there existed no evidence that we could find, to indicate that a human being had ever before trod that ground.

I sincerely regret that the fates have withheld from me the power to express the sensations of that next half hour, while we were groping in that forest for some evidence of the existence of man. It differed materially, from what we experienced when we first struck the soil of North Carolina free. Then we were surrounded by the evidences of civilization, in fact, were standing by the side of one of the arteries of commerce, with its rumble still sounding in our ears. Here, while we were thoroughly conscious that we were not in heaven, we did know, that we stood there alone, with the Creator.

The hush, seemed eternal. The rain drops fell from a new sky; they dripped from leaves which no man owned—upon

soil, no human foot had ever trod before—so it seemed to us.

At length we were attracted to a tree which bore a mark that was visible for some distance. We examined it carefully. There at last was the impress of an axe. A chip had been taken from the side of that tree. What motive lay behind that chip? Evidently it was not idle sport, for it indicated care and method. We were not versed in frontier ways, and we examined that spot for several minutes, before it dawned upon either, that it might be a "blazed path." That came to us like a gleam of light from heaven. At once one took a position at the tree, while the other began an examination of every tree within a radius of twenty or thirty rods in every direction. Presently, another was found which proved the theory and fixed the direction. We were once more in touch with humanity. We had found a "blazed path." Where it led, we were entirely ignorant, but it seemed to point in the direction we supposed we would be safest in moving, and we at once concluded to follow it. We followed it, probably not five miles; but it led to the end of our liberty for nearly ten months. Pursuing our way through the tangled brush, our progress was slow, and our view almost entirely obstructed. About four o'clock p. m., before we had discovered anything to arouse our suspicions, we heard the click of rifle hammers, and the command, "halt," and found ourselves confronted by five confederate guards stationed in a road, directly where it crossed our "blazed path."

Like the patriarch of old, permitted to gaze into the promised land, but not to enter—fifteen miles from Tennessee and within an arrow shot of freedom—on July twenty-second, to be forcibly turned back from this enchanting vision, to once more share the hospitalities of the Confederate war department, with the positive proof before us, that the conditions must grow steadily worse to the end, supplied an emotion which can be expressed by no language of mine.

I had previously admired the courage of the convict, who had coolly placed the target over his heart, and as the guards were about to fire, cautioned them to be sure and hit the mark. But here the guards stood, apparently undecided

whether to capture us, or dispose of us in the quickest and easiest manner. We had not the courage to request them to fire, as they stood with leveled rifle, nor yet the anxiety to protest. But, speaking for myself, I was several moments in doubt as to which was preferable, a grave on the Blue Ridge, or a return to captivity. True, it was a lonely spot and far from the habitations of men, yet, while it was distant from my friends, it was also far removed from those that hated me, —here, the dews of heaven would moisten, and the wildwood perfume it. It seemed probable to me that Andersonville, could only add to this, prolonged misery. At last the guards dropped the muzzles of their rifles, which had been leveled upon us, and commanded us forward,

[With this chapter, ends the articles as originally published. The subsequent pages explain themselves.]—THE AUTHOR.

## CHAPTER V.

WHY CONTINUED.—MEMORIES WHICH REFUSE TO BE FORGOTTEN.—ONCE MORE IN THE ENEMIES HANDS.—“DID YOU EVER SEE THIS MAN BEFORE?”—“I KNOW HIM NOT.”—BOONE JAIL.—THE STORY GIRLS.—THE MARCH TO MORGANTON.—“THEM TWO YANKS HAVE GOT TO BE TIED TOGETHER.”—THE LOYAL GUARD.—SCHEME TO ESCAPE.—CONSCRIPT CAMP AT MORGANTON.—“YES HE’S THE FELLER, HE’S GOT GOLD PLUGS IN HIS TEETH.”—THE JUNIOR RESERVES.—TRANSFER TO SALISBURY.—HOGAN’S INTRODUCTION.—“ARE YOU THE HOGAN OF LIBBY PRISON?”—HOGAN’ SCHEME FOR LIBERTY.—ANDERSONVILLE AT LAST.

Since completing what I had supposed would be all that would interest the readers of the GAZETTE, in reference to my captivity, I have been importuned to continue the narrative to the end, until I can no longer refuse, notwithstanding its recital will awaken many unwelcome memories,—memories I have striven long, and earnestly to forget,—memories, whose ghastly features, have furnished the architecture for many a dream.

In the last article that was published, my companion and myself, had followed the "blazed path" until it led us into the enemy's camp. We were at once surrounded by a guard of about twenty men and marched back to an old building, which they were using for a guard house, some fifty rods in the rear. While on the way back we overheard the guards say, in talking among themselves, that they had a man at the guard house, that we probably knew. The conversation interested us more than they supposed. Was it Mr. Cook that they referred to? We were unable to exchange even a glance, upon the subject; but each realized, that, if it was "Uncle Billy," his life depended very largely upon our attitude as we were brought before him. As we arrived, the commanding officer of the post took each separately, and went before Mr. Cook. The question was then sternly put, "Did you ever see this man before?"

In my childhood I had been taught that a lie was one of the most contemptible of sins. For the first time in my life I had found a case where the truth would not answer. I did know Mr. Cook. I had been sheltered and fed by him for several days, in fact he had divided with me, nearly the last of his scanty horde of provisions, for which he had but the poor return of a fugitive's thanks. I had heard from his own lips, the story of his struggles for the Union,—the traps that had been set for his conviction, and I knew that if he could be successfully charged with having sheltered and fed two escaped Union soldiers, the chain would require no more links. I was therefore prepared to stand and look Mr. Cook squarely in the face for an indefinite length of time, and then to declare that I knew him not. My companion, imbued with the same understanding of the case, pursued much the same course, and the first stage of the proceeding was securely passed.

The next move explained itself nearly as well as this one had. Mr. Cook, Gorham and myself were placed together in a room and two guards stationed over us. Without an opportunity for conference, it was plain that they expected in the familiarity of confinement, we would, in some unguarded moment, betray the acquaintance we had denied. We were

not to be caught in that way. We never for one moment forgot the situation, or treated Mr. Cook other than as a perfect stranger, but one in sympathy with the Union cause.

The next day under a strong guard, we were marched over the mountain to the little hamlet of Boone, the county seat of Watauga county, and there quartered in the county jail, an old log building, of two stories, and four rooms. Confined in one of the upper rooms, on our arrival, were the Story girls. Though we had met none of the family before, we knew them to be Union people, and found they had been arrested about the time Mr. Cook had been, or shortly after we had left the thicket of laurel near their home. To one of these young ladies, I presented, as a keepsake, the last trinket I had, a small, silver, Greek cross, the badge of the 2d. division 6th corps. We parted that morning, and the fate of those girls I have never been able to learn. Morganton the nearest railway station, and the conscript camp for the west end of the state, lay over the mountains in a southeasterly direction, and about forty miles distant. It was necessary that we should march it. There were probably thirty or more in all, of the Union people they had arrested, and of the refugees they had captured in the mountains. In their preparations for the march, they seemed to have no anxiety about any except the two escaped Yanks, as we were called. There is an old maxim, which gives to necessity the credit for many inventions. "Them two Yanks have got to be tied together," these were the Major's orders. If there was a rope in Watauga county, we certainly did not see one, but those denizens of the mountain, prepared withes from the bark of hickory saplings and my six foot companion and myself, were tied arm to arm above the elbow, placed in the rear file on the line, and ordered forward. As our movements were restricted by the hickory thongs, the march to Lenoir was long and hard, about twenty miles. We reached there before dark, and camped by the roadside for the night. After dark, we made the discovery that one of our guards was a loyal man. Immediately another scheme for escape, was well under way, but this man's shortcomings, were evidently understood, for

he was soon removed beyond our reach and with him, every chance of success.

The next day about night, we reached the conscript camp at Morganton, where there was assembled for organization, a battalion of the junior reserves, as the conscripts below the age of eighteen were called. When we reached the camp, we were released from the thongs and permitted freedom to stroll among the boys and talk with them. Here appeared one of the most pathetic features of the conflict,—immaturity, every one. Engaged at a game of marbles, none of them would have appeared out of place, or for a few of the more mature as drummer boys in active service, but to see this battalion of children, actually and actively fitting themselves for a profession which must, if the war continued long, add to its natural horrors, the graves of childhood in an unholy cause, did seem inhuman. We had grown familiar with the sight of dead men, but the most stoical soldier must be moved by this,—not one that looked as though they could carry the outfit of a soldier ten miles. While we could only pity those youth, we were often forced to smile at their enthusiasm, yet through it all we could see that they were soon to become the pall bearers of the confederacy. Surely the "cradle had been robbed."

Of those who were there on our arrival and who came across the mountain with us, it seemed evident that about one half of that one hundred and thirty-two who started from Yadkin county had shared our fate, while the other half were still unaccounted for and we could only hope they had found their way through the lines. Nowhere among them could I find Mr. Spencer or his boys (the people we had started with and whose provisions we had shared) and never since have I been able to learn anything of them.

Up to this time my identity was never called in question, so far as I had known. I had always stated the facts in reference to my service and thought no more of it. On the second day at Morganton, an officer in company with one of the captured refugees, came to me and asks of him: "Is this the man?" "Yes, he's the feller; he's got gold plugs in his teeth."

Without any explanation they turned and left me in doubt as to what it all meant. Shortly after, I was ordered before a drumhead tribunal where the matter was made plain. They were looking for sergeant Johnson, the leader of the refugees. He was known to be a small man and was said to be a Union sergeant. They had a man here that answered the description in everything but name. The trial resulted in vindicating my position, but in the loss of my diary, a loss I have mourned ever since. At the close of the trial the commandant assured me that he was satisfied that I was a soldier from the Potomac army and a prisoner of war, and should be considered as such and sent forward at the earliest moment. It was shortly announced that our train would go that evening and we gathered our few belongings and seated ourselves for a final visit, in a very quiet way, with "Uncle Billy Cook." There were no guards near us and we could talk freely. Mr. Cook was a man who needed no words of encouragement to face a crisis into which his conception of duty had led him; but when we separated I left with the impression that Mr. Cook expected to be either shot or hung, and it was not until many years later that I learned that he survived the war and died in the late seventies.

That night, we left Morganton for Raleigh, only to be returned at once to Salisbury, where we arrived on one Sunday morning, about the twenty-eighth of July. The prison at Salisbury was a brick building, which had formerly been a cotton factory, and was surrounded by a high fence, inclosing probably four acres. Directly in front of the main building was the main entrance through which we passed, once more to lose our identity, and become, simply two more prisoners in a given total. Here occurred an episode which to understand, requires an explanation, which will carry us over once trodden ground. While we were in Libby prison, we were quartered on what was called the ground floor. While delayed there, one day a small piece of paper came twinkling up through a crack in the floor beneath our feet. Sergeant J. Everett Alden of Co. "F" of our regiment was the first to discover it, he took hold of it,—found there was animation

below us, and after an attempt at conversation.—unfolded the paper and read as follows:

"If you men have any valuables about you, secrete them. You will be stripped and searched.

(Signed) MARTIN E. HOGAN.

This opened up a correspondence which lasted while we remained in Libby,—some two days—and gave us a brief history of Hogan's career. He had been Gen. Kilpatrick's chief of scouts—had been captured below Richmond on the Dahlgren raid,—tried as a spy,—convicted of having hung the negro pilot who betrayed them, inside the defences of Richmond—sentenced to be shot—had his sentence deferred from time to time, and had been confined for seven months in one of the dungeons under our floor, and until he had demanded of the Confederate authorities, that they execute the sentence or release him. We were shortly moved south, and often during the days that followed, in contemplating our condition, did I find my patriotism grow warmer under the influence of Hogan's self abandonment.

Now to return to Salisbury. As we entered the gate, the prisoners in sight were few. It was plain that the accommodations were not crowded, and this was a certain source of satisfaction, for, with everything else gone, the unrestricted air and sunlight of heaven is not forgotten. There proved to be about five hundred prisoners in all, three hundred civilian and two hundred soldiers. The civilian prisoners, included such prominent Union men of the south as John Minor Botts of Virginia and such non-combatant prisoners of war, as army correspondents of the northern newspapers, and all captives whose military status was not well defined. Richardson I remember was there, I think at that time, correspondent for the Cincinnati Times. Shortly after I left, he made his escape from there, succeeded in reaching our lines, afterwards wrote "Field, Dungeon and Escape,"—was finally shot soon after in New York by McFarland, and thus ended a very bright life under a cloud of scandal.

While we were strolling leisurely toward the building with

a view to establishing quarters, a soldierly appearing man of about our own age, a trifle below the medium height, of sandy complexion, blue eyes, plainly of a nervous temperament, who approached, and, with his self-introduction, explained his purpose at once as follows: "Where do you men come from?" "From the mountains," we replied. "Are you runaways?" he asked: "Yes." was the answer. "Is there any more game left in you?" It now seemed best for us to ask the questions. We had not the slightest idea what his object was, and we inquired his purpose. "You say you are escaped prisoners," he replied. "I supposed you were for your appearance indicated it. I have assumed that what you have made one attempt at, you might be willing to repeat under favorable circumstances." We assured him that the assumption was safe—"but, first tell us, who are you, and what reason have we to suppose that you can do better than we can do for ourselves?" "My name is Hogan," he said, "I have only been here a few days, but I have made the acquaintance of an Alabama lieutenant, on duty here, who is a loyal man and in conjunction with, or rather by his connivance, I can liberate the camp if I can get two hundred men who will go with me and stand by me." "You say your name is Hogan?" "Where did you come from?" "Richmond, about ten days ago." "Are you the Hogan confined under Libby prison—that Alden corresponded with, through a crack in the floor?" "Yes, but what do you know about that?" When we were through, we discovered that, while we had never met, yet, we were old acquaintances, and our names were placed on his list, which brought the number up to one hundred and seventy-three as I recall it.

This was Sunday morning. The plan was as follows: Hogan's Alabama friend, in the order of succession, would be in command of the relief guard, which was to come on duty the next Tuesday at nine o'clock a. m. The break was to be attempted at ten a. m. of that day at the main gate, where the lieutenant referred to had promised to station two loyal guards with instructions to fire high. It was expected that the relief guard would by this time, be scattered about the city and the

stacks of arms be an easy capture if the delay at the gate was not too long. The plan seemed full of hazard and, personally I had little hope of success from the first, but was willing to make the venture. The affair came to an inglorious end but in a way not expected, by any one engaged in it. Monday morning, after roll call, a Confederate sergeant and four men came in where we were, arrested Hogan and took him out before the commandant. Captain Fuqua, who addressed him at once as follows:

"You are charged with mutiny, sir; what do you say?"

"I demand," retorted Hogan, "that you bring my accuser before me."

"Your accuser will never be brought before you," said the captain, "but the charge I believe to be true and I am strongly inclined to make an example of you by shooting you to-morrow morning at ten o'clock."

"Captain Fuqua," said Hogan, "you forget that I belong to a government that is able to protect her soldiers. Sir I dare you to shoot me to-morrow, or any other day."

He was finally manacled hand and foot, and in that way joined us, and so remained until we were all finally sent to Andersonville together perhaps ten days later.

Hogan subsequently made his escape from Andersonville by tunneling under the stockade, but was recaptured by the hounds, and remained in captivity until the close of the war, arriving at Annapolis Md. on the same steamer with myself about the fifteenth of May. It was probably the twentieth of the same month, as we were each, about leaving for our respective homes, to lay down, as we supposed the implements of war forever, and to resume the struggle of life as best we might, and regain, if possible, the business ground we had lost, that I bade Hogan adieu.

What the business world had to offer, which would be at all in harmony with the emotions and training of men who felt, that for four years they had cast into the scales of permanent free government, their feeble mite, and had lain upon the altar of freedom, all that freedom had required,—we were entirely ignorant, as neither had ever received any business

training, but the future must be met as the past had been, and thus we parted. For more than twenty years, I had not heard from him. Knowing that he entered the service from Terre Haute, Ind., I stopped there several years ago to see if I could learn anything about him. I found a brother of his on the police force of the city who gave me his subsequent history which was, briefly, as follows: He settled in Terre Haute,—married,—engaged in the meat business for a year or two,—found that too monotonous,—closed it out, and got a commission of 1st Lieutenant in the regular army,—served on the frontier for ten years. He grew tired of that and resigned to try civil life once more. He returned to Terre Haute, and tried the meat business again, but to no use.—it was too slow, and he closed it out. He longed for something stirring and he secured the appointment of assistant marshal for the mountain districts of Missouri. He repaired to his post and entered upon his duties contentedly, and remained so, until he heard of a desperado, outside of his bailiwick, who had announced to the world, that he should never be captured alive. When Hogan heard of this he at once informed the authorities that such cases were just the ones he was looking for, and asked as a favor, the privilege of executing the warrant. The privilege was granted, and Hogan at once put himself upon the fellow's trail. He very soon unearthed him,—alone he pursued until they finally met in an old deserted building, and there the story ends. Hogan was found shot full of holes,—tenderly returned for a last resting place by the side of his family, at Terre Haute, and thus went out one of the bravest lives I ever knew.

Pollard, in his "Lost Cause," referring to the Dahlgren papers, speaks of a scout named Hogan, which was the one referred to.

## CHAPTER VI.

DEPARTURE FROM SALISBURY.—SOUTH CAROLINA STATE PRISON.—  
“NO YANKS MOVED BY NIGHT.”—ANDERSONVILLE SIX O’CLOCK  
P. M. AUGUST 11TH 1864.—NO ONE COMPETENT TO WRITE  
IT’S HISTORY.—DESPAIR, THE SILENT MESSENGER OF DEATH.  
—THE VITAL WORTH OF SOAP.—CRITICISMS OF THE SOUTHERN  
CONFEDERACY, THEIR LACK OF COMPETENT MEN.—INTERRUP-  
TION OF THE CARTEL.

The prison at Salisbury sustained about the same relation to the south, that the old Capitol prison did to the north,—it was not properly a military prison at that time. Later it came to be, and the following winter, I have been told, it dropped to the level of the worst. The graves there indicate it.

After a lapse of thirty years—it is strange how the memory halts and stumbles in its effort to recall names and dates—I have nothing to fix the date of our departure from Salisbury, except the date of our arrival at Andersonville, and from that it must have been about the sixth of August, when Hogan, with his ball and chain and handcuffs, myself and companion and probably half a dozen more of the same stripe, were placed on board a train under a heavy guard, and started south. Hogan’s “jewels” had previously been fixed so that they could be easily removed, but the guards had not discovered it.

Scientific people tell us that there are certain mental affinities, which, when assembled under the proper conditions, produce a psychological compound of almost explosive energy. We had it here. I think that was the most restless crowd I ever saw, for one not allowed to move. The strength of the guard, the extra precautions, all told plainly that our keepers had been informed of our character, and were to be held responsible for our safe delivery. Thanks to their sagacity, they did deliver us safely. Like Wellington, we prayed for “night or Blucher.” It was plain, that daylight

would be allowed to furnish no relaxation of vigilance, or open any avenue for escape.

Just before dark, we reached Columbia, the capitol of South Carolina—turned over to the care of the prison authorities—marched into the penitentiary, and locked in. It was with rather heavy hearts that we lay down that night upon the stone floor of the South Carolina state prison; not that the accommodations were below our standard, but it seemed to disclose the Confederate plan, not to move those "Yanks" by night. It proved to be true, for we were transferred in a similar way at Augusta Ga. and at Macon, arriving at Andersonville station in the afternoon of August 11th, 1864.

Here, at last confronting us, was the condition against which we had struggled, to no other purpose, than to delay by five or six weeks our arrival, during which time, we had been generously supplied with anti-scorbutics, until our physical system was well fortified against an opposite diet. It prolonged by about so much, our powers of resistance to the peculiar diseases of the camp, during which time, the Confederacy was drawing so much nearer its end.

Andersonville was situated about sixty miles south of Macon in Sumter County, Georgia, and as the report stated, the site was chosen because of its three prominent advantages: First it was well inland and thought to be secure from Federal invasion or disturbance; second, it was in the midst of the then existing food supply of the Confederacy, and third, it was known to be healthy. A plot of ground was therefore surveyed, in a dense pine wood, about half a mile east of the railroad station at Andersonville. The trees felled, chopped into logs about twenty feet long, a stockade built by digging a trench about five feet deep, and setting the logs upon end side by side, and thus inclosing a piece of ground of what was said to be, twenty-seven acres. The inclosure was an oblong, running nearly north and south, and situated east from the station. The plot was located so as to span a creek for a water supply; the ground rose on either side of the creek, to the south less, to the north more. A little to the south of the center of the oblong, was a morass embracing nearly one

quarter of the area of the inclosure, through which the creek passed. At the west side where the creek entered, it had been contracted into a plank sluice probably ten or fifteen feet wide ; this was expected to supply the camp with water. About ten rods below, the stream was drawn into a narrower sluice, over which the sink was built, and in that way the stream was expected to perform the dual service of supplying the prisoners with water and of removing the offal. On the west side of the sink for several rods back the soil was a deposit of decayed vegetable matter, continually moist and untenable.

This much we could see of Andersonville, from our position outside while we were waiting for the Commandant Captain Wurtz, to take the descriptive list of his new visitors. It was about six o'clock p. m. when the large south gate was opened and my companion and myself passed into the enclosure and assigned to the third ninety of the one hundred and thirty-third detachment, as I remember. The organization of the camp for the purpose of drawing rations, was as follows : Thirty men in each mess, three messes in each sub-division or ninety, three nineties in each detachment ; and at this time there were one hundred and thirty-three detachments as I recall it, but probably none of them full. We were assigned, as all who came in later seemed to be, to fill vacancies.

At last the gates of Andersonville had been closed upon us and we stood in the midst of a tangled mat of humanity, of thirty thousand men or more, apparently, all strangers to each other, and to us, except here and there twos and threes would be paired off, as we were, for mutual comfort or assistance,—each apparently struggling against an adverse fate they were powerless to avert, and all praying that powerful entity, the United States government to come to their relief.

Here in promiscuous assemblage, was to be found all grades of intelligence, from the college graduate to the unlettered negro,—all shades of character, from the noblest manhood to the vilest criminal, dwelling together in crowded confinement, without police, magistrate, or law. This had been the condition at Andersonville from its organization until late in June.



H. I. GORHAM.  
April, 1864.



when the criminal element of the camp became so brazen and defiant, that a mass meeting was called, to be held near the main gate, to deliberate upon the matter and decide what was best to be done. It was rumored that murder had been committed, and the safety of the camp demanded protection. Such was the call under which they assembled. The meeting resulted in the formation of a strong police force, the election or appointment of a judge, and prosecuting attorney, and the organizing of a court. The chief of the police then notified Captain Wurtz, of the action of the prisoners, and assured him as he had denied them protection, they should now, protect themselves. Capt. Wurtz disclaimed any connection with the matter, but offered to guard the arrested, while awaiting their trial, which was accepted. When all was ready, the police were ordered to arrest all suspects. And here comes into view the ludicrous feature of the case; that camp of thirty thousand men, which but a few days before, had seemed to be entirely dominated by evil, was now to disclose the fact, that criminals among men are comparatively very few. The impression had prevailed that a severe struggle, alone would be necessary to overcome the ruffians as the numbers seemed so formidable, but when all arrests that had been reported to the chief of the police, had been made, there were probably not more than fifty. The court concluded its labors, after finding itself called to pass upon all sorts of misdemeanor, from petty larceny, to murder in the first degree. The mode of punishment, had to be governed by the means at hand and some of them were novel, but six of the prisoners, were found guilty of murder, and on the eleventh day of July were hung inside the stockade. From that moment, individual rights were secure and order reigned in Andersonville.

It is fortunate that no history of Andersonville can ever be written. Many stories of it have been given, but each so far as I have examined, seem only to reflect the writers animosity. That is not the spirit in which history must be written. The story of Andersonville is unique, it has no parallel, and from the nature of the case, never can have. To be written by one not there, would be plainly impossible, while to one who was

there, the memories would be likely to unbalance even a judicial mind.

He who describes death in its usual peaceful forms, describes not Andersonville. He who dwells at length, upon the pangs of death as they are generally painted, reaches not the case. Not that the suffering was more intense, it was not; I think quite the reverse; but it differed in kind. Science has recently discovered that grief is a disease, that preys upon the vitals, which, if long continued, withers and dries the fountain. Here, was despair,—and the heart stopped.

That was a motley crowd, that was gathered there. There were men from nearly every nation in the world, from every state in the Union, and I suppose from nearly every town in many of the northern states. To one just entering, it looked as though they had been dropped down there from some place above, until they had filled the entire habitable space, some with a few belongings, perhaps a piece of a tent or a blanket,—either of which, would be at once arranged as a shelter,—with no paths, or attempts at any,—and no way to leave one's immediate camping place except by winding about the camping place of others, wherever one wished to go,—with the ground strewn with the excrement of those too feeble to move, and the dead often lying in the paths, and obstructing what few avenues there were. Here was an odor that must have offended the gods, for it certainly smelled to heaven. Here was disorder run riot. The filth which always accompanies disorder, was here aggravated by its own magnitude, and this was enhanced by the despondency of those sensitive souls who were powerless to escape, or prevent it. Here were all conditions, from comparative health, down through the different stages of disease, to the stark forms which lay in the pathway, perchance where they fell, only to remain there until the next morning's surgeon's call at nine o'clock. Here was an indifference to human suffering, which could exist only, in a community where human comforts were entirely eliminated, and human necessities so far curtailed, that none could spare and live. Strange, and valuable, are the lessons to be learned upon the verge and brink of human existance. Here was

crime, as cold blooded as any in the world, and here was worship that sprang spontaneously from the human heart, and found expression in all languages.

Standing upon the sunset plain of life, and gazing back through the vista of the years, I still wonder what strange thing of evil brooded over that prison. The weird imagination of Dante, could picture no hell to compare with the brutal instincts of mankind, as they peer from a living grave, out into a living world. The sunlight of heaven there, seemed to glow with pestilential heat, and the moon with malignant blindness,—even the love that regulates the stars, seemed to float above the forest,—nor reached the earth.

Man's neglect of man, made heaven seem cold.

Four o'clock in the afternoon, was the hour for issuing rations, and they usually consisted of corn meal and bacon. The mess that I belonged to used a quarter pound spice can for a measure, both of meal and pea soup, when that was furnished. A full days ration, with our mess, would be as follows; the spice can full of meal, and probably two ounces of bacon, and once in two or three days a half teaspoonful of salt. The corn meal was nearly always issued but the bacon was often missing, and to supply the place of that, once in a week perhaps, there would be issued a small piece of fresh beef; or that being absent, a few spoonfuls of sorghum would be furnished if at hand, if not, then the spice can full of pea soup. Sometimes the meal would be issued in the form of bread, but with this explanation, I recall nothing else that was issued at Andersonville.

To those but recently arrived, the ration seemed altogether too meager to be called a meal. Yet it must be made to serve for twenty-four hours. An intense hunger would follow it for a few days, and until the digestion had become impaired by the diet; then it gave place to a strong yearning for something "our mothers used to make," until at last a kind of resignation brooded over the whole and the end was awaited with more or less indifference. It was not necessary that one should be there long to see that few escapes could be attempted on that diet. We therefore devoted our atten-

tion to the care of our physical being, as best we could with the means at hand. Scarcely any one among that mass of men, that had any clothing except what they had on. If there was any soap in the confederacy, we saw none at any of their prisons, and with many, that was the most serious privation encountered.

To a soldier who has offered his life to his country, and had hoped at last, if die he must, to fall where the storm was fiercest, to die where he fell, and finally, to be wrapped in his blanket and buried upon the field he had defended, furnished a theme he could dwell upon, if not with perfect resignation, at least, without humiliation. But the sensation that attends "slowly rotting alive," is so loathsome that insanity would often come to the sufferers' relief.

The south has been severely criticised for this state of things, and some even have assumed that it was a concerted attempt on the part of the authorities to unfit all Union soldiers for further service. This is plainly an exaggeration. Some there undoubtedly were, who desired, and worked to that end; but there were other, and more humane reasons to account for the privations of their prisons. The south was not a business people. They had few mechanics. During the last two years, they suffered more for the want of artisans and mechanics than they did for soldiers. They seemed to have very little capacity to adapt the means they had, to the end they wished to serve. In short there was no man in the Confederacy, capable of handling either of the great departments of their service, if one may judge by the results. They had no competent financier to manage their treasury; no quarter-master-general competent to gather their army stores; and no master of transportation able to repair the wastage of war; consequently, toward the last, everything went at sixes and sevens, and in that state of the public service, with their own army scantily fed, what more natural than that the prisoners be the last to be served, and obliged to take up with what there was left. Such was probably the true state of the case.

The world has always asked, why not shelter the prisoners. Sure enough, I confess that is the hardest feature to recon-

cile. This, was probably the true condition; it was plain that the stockades were originally designed for temporary use. Experience had taught them that the operations of a single campaign were sufficient to fill such an enclosure, and they doubtless expected that any interruption of the cartel would be speedily adjusted, and no single set of men be required to remain longer than a few weeks time at most. When they found the cartel permanently interrupted, it is possible that they thought, by permitting the same conditions to remain, it might induce the United States government to resume the exchange. They probably rested on this hope until the operations of the war showed them plainly, that they had no spot in all the South, where they could hold prisoners in large numbers, and it was then, too late to house them.

On September first, the battle of Jonesboro occurred, which decided the fate of Atlanta, and on the second, the city was occupied by Sherman. This left Andersonville plainly insecure as a prison. Preparations were at once made to vacate the camp. Detachments of two or three hundred were often drawn, and, as we supposed sent to Meridian, Miss., for exchange. At last in the order of succession, the thirty-third detachment was called for on the eighteenth day of September, and my companion and myself were once more on the outside,—placed on a train, and as we supposed, to be sent to Meridian, Miss., for exchange or parole. The train was headed toward Fort Valley, and that confirmed our longing.

Strange how the wish is often the only foundation for the hope.

## CHAPTER VII.

TRANSFER TO SAVANNAH.—THE UNFINISHED STOCKADE.—THE FOREMAN OF THE WORK SQUAD.—“DO YOU KNOW S. W. GLEASON?”—“MADE BY THE HAND OF HER YOU KNOW.”—THE SUBLIME VIRTUE.—TRANSFER TO MILLEN.—FRIEND GRATON’S MISSION.—REJECTION OF CONFEDERATE OVERTURES.

The train left the station at Andersonville without much delay, and as it neared the junction at Fort Valley, the alternations between hope and fear became almost painful. It was there the train must leave the main track and turn west, if our destination was to be Meridian, Miss., then the only point for exchange. If we passed there, it would probably be to occupy some other prison on the Atlantic coast.

Was it the son of Pluto that raised the life-giving water to the lips of one who was famishing for it, only that he might enjoy the look of pain which its removal might bring? Thus did the fates seem to mock at our misery as we passed Fort Valley.

Along over the rickety tramway called the Georgia Central railroad,—with its strap iron rails, spiked to wood sleepers, its rolling stock, apparently toggled up with what they had left lying about the railroad repair shops of the South when they seceded, with their engine bells long since removed, and cast into artillery,—we at length disembarked at Savannah, moved out through Liberty street to the penitentiary ground, where a plank stockade was in process of hurried erection by a party of colored workmen under the direction of a white superintendent. When we arrived, the work was incomplete, and it was necessary not only to guard the camp closely, but to see that no conversation was allowed with the workmen.

Before proceeding, let us go back to old Colrain, the home of my childhood; who that lived in the region round about in the fifties, but will recall the genial, warm hearted merchant at Griswoldville, S. W. Gleason. He had been an iron

founder of the old school, but had left that to engage in the mercantile business, and continued in trade until late in the fifties, when he disposed of his stock and moved South. He was well advanced in music; was one of the best of his time to be found in the rural districts, had been my early singing teacher, and choir leader in after years, and when he left for his new home in the South,—which, by the way, was farther off then, than it is now,—was mourned as one near of kin. He had settled in Savannah, Ga. and had established himself in business at the outbreak of hostilities. He had never forgotten his Colrain friends, but the last heard from him, before communication closed, left some in doubt as to his loyalty. One of the last steamers that left Savannah for New York, brought among her passengers, two of his children for an education in northern schools. They were in the homes of relatives and among kindred who were also kin to myself and that made their general condition a matter of more than ordinary interest to me. I had been home, the preceding January, on furlough, and had then learned about them and no change had been reported since, which brought the tidings down to within about three months of my arrival at Savannah. Knowing Mr. Gleason's fondness for his children, I knew he would be glad of even that meager intelligence, and to that end I opened a conversation with the foreman of the working force as follows:

"Are you a resident of Savannah, Sir?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Do you chance to know a man by the name of Gleason?"

"S. W. Gleason?" he asked.

"Yes that is the name."

"Yes; he is my neighbor, and a very warm friend. He is an iron founder, and has cast all the torpedoes which line the coast from Wilmington to Galveston. What do you know of him?"

"I knew him in Massachusetts before he came South, and if you will kindly say to Mr. Gleason, when you meet him, that there is a prisoner here who lived in the same town with him in the North, and who saw his two children in January,

and was in correspondence with his friends, until the last of June, and you can safely say to him that all was well with them at that time."

"What is your name, Sir?" he asked.

"Never mind," I replied. "I don't care to have Mr. Gleason know who it is. But you can assure him that the information is reliable; as I suppose his means of communicating with them must be very seldom, and even then quite difficult. I only wish to do them the trifling favor I have named."

"But they may wish to communicate with you, and how shall I know who to call for, unless you give me your name?"

By this time Mr. Solomon, for that proved to be the foreman's name, had become interested and insisted upon knowing who I was.

I said, "Mr. Solomon, you have just told me that Mr. Cleason is casting shells for the Confederate government; he must then in a certain sense, be in the confederate service, and I have no desire to compromise Mr. Gleason, or to embarrass him by the renewal of an acquaintance which, under the circumstances, can only annoy. You must remember that I am a Union soldier, and an enemy to the cause he is serving. It is true I am a prisoner in your hands, but that in no sense alters my relation to my government."

"Young man," said he "you don't know it all. Tell me your name and later, I may be able to explain matters to you."

He took my name, and as we separated, he said: "Meet me here to-morrow morning." After the workmen had been assigned their several duties the next morning, and it was possible without attracting attention, I strolled up to where the foreman, Mr. Solomon, stood, quietly said, "good morning," and at once received from him the following message. "Mr. Gleason is very much interested in the information I gave him last evening and wishes me to ask you to write him all about yourself, —what regiment,—when enlisted,—when captured, and where,—who of his friends beside, are in the service, and where,—and all so done, that no name can be traced, no date fixed, and no place located. And further, Mr. Gleason wishes me to ascertain now, what you are in

need of, as he wishes to assist you in any way that he can, but he can not do it himself and has requested me to do it for him. Notwithstanding he is at work for the ordnance department, he is a northern man and is being constantly watched to that extent that he finds himself compelled to pursue a course of conduct not at all in keeping with his inclinations."

"Please say to Mr. Gleason," I replied, "that there is nothing that I am really suffering for except reading matter. If he has anything, of whatever character which is worthless to him, it will be acceptable here. Even a Patent Office report would meet a cordial welcome. But tell me, how shall I write Mr. Gleason? I have neither paper or pencil. When your people captured me, they relieved me of all assets of that character, and I judge they cannot be plenty among you."

Mr. Solomon took from his jacket, a small blank book and tore from it as much as he could spare. In his pocket he found about an inch of what had been a pencil, and thus equipped, I undertook the task of informing Mr. Gleason of those facts he wished to know, in language that no other might understand. The next day when Mr. Solomon came in I was prepared to send Mr. Gleason the first letter. Our correspondence was continued until the work was completed, which was several days, during which time, Mrs. Gleason had prepared and sent me a basket containing such things as only a woman would think of; first, there were some needles and thread,—I had given my last to Mrs. Cook, back on the mountain,—then there was a pair of socks and a shirt—"made by the hand of her you know," pinned to it; and lastly a towel and piece of soap. The towel I have preserved as one of the sacred relics of the past,—the piece of soap is gone, but the fragrant memory of its giver will abide with me always.

As Mr. Solomon received the basket to return with my thanks to the generous givers, he took from his pocket a folded paper and handed me, saying; Mr. Gleason sends this to you, it is for old acquaintance sake, and he was gone. Unfolding the paper, I found inside, a Georgia State bank bill for one hundred dollars.

There is one virtue more sublime than to be able to endure

privations with fortitude. That is the generosity which, unsolicited, hastens to its relief.

The stockade at Savannah was new and, for a few days at least, we could enjoy fairly wholesome surroundings. The rations were different, also; we were among the rice fields, rather than the corn fields of the state, and the change was life-giving. More fresh beef found its way into the prison. While we were enjoying the improved conditions, the Savannah papers were constantly clamoring for our removal, on sanitary grounds. It was the yellow fever season, and we were supposed to be the best possible subjects for it. Some cases had already appeared, and that made our removal imperative, consequently our stay there was short,—I think not more than three weeks. When we were moved, it was to a point some ninety miles west, on the Central railroad to a stockade which had been recently built at Millen. This new prison, had the general features of Andersonville, was hewn out of the forest, and built to span a stream of considerable magnitude. The space was ample for more than twice the number we had there, and it seemed refreshing to be able to move without annoying ones neighbor. Here at last was freedom of action we had not enjoyed since we left Salisbury. We knew little of the whereabouts of Andersonville's great mass of prisoners,—Millen could not have held more than one third of them and we were then ignorant of the Florence prison. However, time passed along and as the enclosure contained plenty of tree tops, we made the only commodious quarters we had in the South, and enjoyed them, (if that is the word to use), about six weeks. While at Millen, in November, the Confederate government called for three thousand sick for parole. My name was on the list, but, on examination, the sick were so far in excess of the number called for, that the worst cases only could be accepted. As my case fell far short of being the worst, it was consequently rejected. Previously, however, I had entered into an agreement with an acquaintance I had made there, Elwin S. Graton, of the twenty-first Mass. regiment, that should either, succeed in passing the surgeons and reaching home, that the one so fortunate

would notify the friends of the other, and in that way relieve what anxiety it were possible. Friend Graton went through, reached home in due time, religiously carried out his promise to me, and in that way renewed a waning hope. He still lives a respected citizen of Paxton Mass., but I doubt if he ever fully realized the joy that his kindly act, brought to a few hearts.

I have previously stated that the South suffered, more at the last, for the want of artisans and mechanics than they did for soldiers. This was demonstrated both at Savannah and at Millen, where the most urgent invitations were extended to any who could, and would, give their parole of honor not to escape, and accept work for the Confederacy, as shoemakers, saddlers, harness makers, machinists, in short, men of any trade could secure very liberal terms if they would only work for the Confederate government. I am convinced that the historian of the future will find that the South were conquered more by their own lack of tact and ingenuity, than by Federal bayonets even. No one, so far as I know, have ever questioned the quality of the Southern armies. For fighting qualities, they stood upon a level with the best. But the best soldiers are subject to human limitations, as well as the poorest. The best soldier, without a gun, could never be a very formidable antagonist to even a poor one well armed. Just in proportion as the South were wanting first, conveniences, then comforts, then necessities, by just so much, were they weaker than their antagonist, whose ingenuity was never taxed to supply all three and even more. When the South shall come to realize, as she surely will, that it was her own want of development along these lines, that not only dug the grave of the "Lost Cause," but fostered the insane political growth which made the conflict possible, then they will welcome the development of their internal resources, and the advancement of their people in the mechanic arts. It was a strange spectacle at Savannah, to see the Confederate officers almost entreating the Union prisoner to go outside, "have all you wish to eat." and work for them. The despised Yankee could build engines; they needed them badly. They could also

make boots, and boots were selling at nine hundred dollars a pair. But no! and here I wish to record to the eternal honor of the Union soldier, not one in a thousand would consent to accept even life, on those terms.

## CHAPTER VIII.

CENSORSHIP OF THE SOUTHERN PRESS.—“ARE THE LOSSES SO HEAVY THEY DARE NOT REVEAL THEM?”—“IN SHERMAN’S WAY.”—IN THE WOODS AT BLACKSHIRE.—THE MARCH TO ALBANY.—ANDERSONVILLE AGAIN, DEC. 25TH, ‘64.—“WHAT A CHRISTMAS.”—WILSON’S RAID.—THE MACON PAPERS.

The days succeeded each other with but little change at Millen. A few papers found their way into the prison and from them we could learn nothing of army movements, and the general character of press reports seemed to indicate plainly that the Confederate government exercised a strict censorship over everything published. There were letters of the most piteous tone, begging the government to take the people into their confidence,—forward the mails, and let them know whether their boys were dead or alive. “We have written,” says one letter, “to the company and regimental officers to know if our boy still lives, but no tidings from them, even. Are the losses so heavy the authorities dare not let them be known? How long are we expected to be patient under this great anxiety?”

It was to such “straws” as these, that the Union prisoner was obliged to look for what comfort the Southern prisons afforded. It told plainly that the days of the Confederacy were numbered.

On the evening of December 1st, about nine o’clock, the call for rations was announced. It was at such an unusual time that it told plainly that some move had been ordered and that haste must be observed. The detachments were served in the order of sequence, and when they reached my number,—which was near the last—it must have been nearly

one o'clock a. m. of December 2d. The rations were said to be for three days; they consisted of about a pound of fresh beef and half a pound of hard bread. This was the first, and I think, with one exception, the last bread made from wheat flour, ever issued to me, at any of their prisons. It was the night of the fifth before we received anything more and with me, the pangs of hunger reached the most serious stage of my entire experience. I was still some distance removed from starvation, but I had lost all inclination to question the "bill of fare." There was nothing in all the list, either foreign or domestic, among all the different foods, either equine, bovine, canine or feline, that would have been rejected that night at Blackshear. Fortunate indeed, is he who treads life's mazy path to its close, and knows not the torture of real hunger.

The alacrity with which the camp was emptied at Millen, and the haste they displayed in crowding that seven thousand prisoners into Savannah, was explained later. We were in "Sherman's" way. As we neared Savannah, it was plain we were seriously in the way of the Confederacy, for the movements indicated conclusively that the authorities knew not what to do with us. Our accommodations were flat cars, and we were side-tracked, then moved only to be returned later, and this process was kept up for nearly two days, during which time the prisoners were not allowed to even alight from the train. After being shifted about in Savannah until nearly exhausted, we were moved out on the Savannah, Albany and Gulf railroad, for what destination we were ignorant. Our progress was attended with many difficulties. Often the engine was out of wood or water, and it was necessary to stop and chop the wood and once, to fill the tender with pails, After spending nearly three days and nights on a crowded flat car without leaving it, we finally "drew rein" at No. nine station, just south of where the railroad crosses the Altamaha river, at a place called Blackshear. Here the train stopped, the guards ordered off the cars and formed in line around the entire train, and far enough back to allow the prisoners to alight. For the first time in seventy hours we were permitted to move from our position, and realize what perfect in-

action meant. The weather had been cold, and for the first time in my life, I found myself unable to stand, unaided. Crouched in one position for three days and nights without food or sleep, had left but a poor specimen of a soldier. It was several minutes before locomotion was possible. When it was, I wrapped my blanket about me and strolled down to the engine for what warmth was there. I had been there but short time when Gorham called to me from the car. I returned to learn what was wanted. "Let me take your blanket," he said. I replied that I was nearly frozen and could not spare it. As he had no blanket I suggested that he join me and share mine. He was still standing upon the car where we had both ridden so long. There had been a guard stationed at our corner and very near us all the way from Millen and we had noticed that he had a fine, new bedquilt, and many were the covetous glances it attracted. When the guards were ordered off the train, this one had left his camp equipage lying at his old post. Gorham says, "I want your blanket!" The tone of voice, and the emphasis was so similar to that which summoned me to the escape, that I made no further objections but gave it to him. When he joined me—as he shortly did—he brought, not only our few belongings, but, folded in my blanket, the "Confederate" bedquilt.

The train was soon moved out of our way and the prisoners marched down into the woods, a strong guard placed about us and the issue of rations began. After our long fast, the ration of that night, was a pint of raw corn and nothing more. Presently, every man was roasting his corn, and with me, at least, it was sufficient to stay the ravages of hunger.

We expected there would be a search for that bedquilt, consequently we had prepared our couch of leaves, with that in view. It came, as we had expected. An officer accompanied the guard and went through the entire camp, to no purpose; they did not find the quilt and it sheltered us from the cold until the close of the war. This transaction I make no attempt to justify. I never recall it with satisfaction. It was the only one that I was connected with during the four years of the war that I fail to recall with something of pride. This

I do not,—I relate it, to show that the moral perspective changes as we near the border land of human existence. Then, it seemed like a special blessing from above, thrown in our way to rob the Confederacy of a grave.

Our stay at Blackshear was short,—perhaps a week—during which time the Confederate authorities were evidently trying to assemble the entire force of prisoners under one guard. We learned that they had established another prison at Florence, South Carolina, and had taken one train load from our detachment at Blackshear and sent there, which included several men from my company. Here again, memory is indistinct. As I recall it, Geo. B. French, Otis Pike, and Wm. H Seymour left us here, at all events I lose sight of them from about that time. Hunter, who was in command about Charleston, S. C., at that time, put a stop to further operations of that character by cutting the railroad at Pocotaligo.

Blackshear has always seemed like an oasis in the memory of those perilous times. Here we were far removed from all apparent danger and the guards were more humane. While we remained there the rations were sufficient, and this is the only time in my experence, of which it can be said. Fresh beef, and a few sweet potatoes were furnished, but what the Confederacy had no intention of doing for us,—thanks to the imperfect organization of the camp,—we found an opportunity to do for ourselves by representing several different messes and drawing double rations, and our stay was not long enough for them to discover the method. We realized that the comforts there must be of short duration, so we made the most of them while they lasted. It must have been December twentieth, I think that we once more mounted flat cars for a journey, somewhere, It proved to be Thomasville, then the terminus of the railroad. This we regarded with suspicion for we learned that it was only sixty miles from Albany and that was forty miles south of Andersonville. We began to mistrust that the old stockade was to be our destination when we finally settled for the winter. as the operations of the cartel we knew were suspended.

As we had feared, our suspicions proved to be well foun-

ded, after an exhausting march of three days, and a short ride by rail, we stood once more at the south gate at Andersonville on the evening of December 25th, '64. What a Christmas! In the years that have followed, however merrily the bells may ring, and loving hearts may glow with peace and good will toward mankind, the withering blight of this night's memory has cast its baleful shadow over each succeeding anniversary. Why this event should leave such an impression, indelibly fixed in my mind, I am unable to explain, I only know, that of all the years, this is the Christmas that alone presents itself in retrospection,—whenever the anniversary is referred to, this, of all the number seems to insist upon stalking forward, always clothed in the same ghastly habiliments. Life has some memories which seem to be seared upon the tablets of the brain.

The night was dark and rainy, and we found the old stockade empty,—it had been deluged by the autumn rains.—re generated by the elements,—the atmosphere was sweet, for the first time to me. The inclosure was barren; not a splinter remained, except a few boards, which had been gathered, and piled inside the "dead line," near the gate and were under the eye of the sentinel. Those boards were a mine of wealth to whoever could secure them; before the guard had discovered it, a few of those boards found their way into our mess. By that time the device was discovered,—the next man that tried it was shot,—that ended that scheme.

We buried the boards in the dirt, and later, when the affair had been forgotten, used them in the construction of quarters. Those boards were more valuable than their weight in gold would be to me now,—"we never miss the water till the well runs dry."

As this was our final camping place, I will introduce the reader to our last family make-up in Andersonville. There were four of us, Fred'k Bassett of one of the Massachusetts regiments, I think the second cavalry; Uriah T. Wood from one of the Michigan regiments and whose home was in Pau Pau, Mich.; Gorham and myself, from the fourth Vermont.

Our assembling was for mutual comfort, but the combina-

*View of Andersonville from the Southeast Corner.*





tion proved to be a very pleasant one. Each one had a blanket and united with what boards we had secured, we made comfortable quarters, with a small fireplace in it. Little was the fuel we had to burn, but the fireplace was there, and when the wood was gone, there seemed to be some warmth in the association. Thus equipped, we waited from day to day the development of events.

Through the tedious days of waiting, the tendency of the human mind toward the sunny side of life, was plainly established here. With hope alone for comfort, that was drawn upon in every emergency, the messes too were often made up or drawn together through its influence, and perhaps I can give no better illustration of what I mean, than by describing briefly one of the messes. I make choice of this, for here the combination was most complete of any that I knew, and in the description, I will digress sufficiently far to follow them down through the paths of peace to a meeting of three of them a quarter of a century later. The living members, should any of them chance to see their names thus made prominent, may not thank me for the pains,—they need not, for I have not consulted them—I take the liberty for the purpose of showing the saving qualities of optimism. It is this alone that can carry men through great crises'.

## CHAPTER IX.

TENDENCY OF THE MIND TOWARD OPTIMISM.—SERGEANT ALDEN'S  
MESS.—THE BOB-TAILED OVERCOAT.—A DELICATE QUESTION  
SETTLED BY THE WAR'S CLOSE.—THE LONG SEPARATION.—  
FINAL MEETING IN BOSTON.—“WHY THIS IS JERSEY.”

When the gates of Andersonville had closed upon that body of prisoners who were to spend the remaining months of the war, and be liberated only at its close, it had one mess of six men which I was more familiar with than any other except my own. It was sergeant Alden's mess, and was, as follows: J. Everett Alden of the Fourth Vermont, John Brundage of the second New Jersey cavalry I think, Eugene Travis,

Willis VanBuren, Byron P. Humphrey, and I think—Peters, from the "Harris Light" cavalry, state of New York. It was called Alden's mess, because he it was that had charge of the detachment. They were a jolly crowd, and when despondency reigned supreme everywhere else, there was either sunshine or its immediate prospect at Alden's. There was no day so dark that there was not something to entertain one at Alden's, and there it was that I passed considerable of the time. Each of those men possessed marked characteristics. From grave to gay was the common transition, in spite of all despondency. The mental make-up of that party as I remember it was as follows; Alden, was one of the sturdy soldiers of the old Vermont Brigade. He had faced the enemies of his country on all the desperate battle fields of the Potomac army up to the investment of Petersburgh, and had stood upon the brink of the grave too often to allow despondency to annoy him. If the rumors (and the camp was always full of them) were unfavorable, he could amuse himself and did, with his chess or checkers, in a game with Peters. John Brundage,—nicknamed Jersey—was the boy of the mess, the youngest of all, red cheeked, fat and happy—the picture of health even there. He was well clothed, his captors had not despoiled him when they took him prisoner, but left him in complete uniform which was of the cavalry pattern, of light blue, with the front of the jacket entirely bespangled with yellow braid, which through its gaudy appearance, had given the regiment the sobriquet, "Butterfly." Although his name was Brundage, it was used only at roll call, and I doubt if one of his mess could have told his name without stopping to think—he always went by the name of "Jersey." Eugene Travis was the farmer of the mess,—a young man of quiet demeanor, and excellent sense, who smiled but seldom, but who took a practical view of things, made the most of what he had and patiently waited the time when he could once more resume his farming up on the Hudson. Willis VanBuren, was the dare-devil of the lot, he it was that had been longest confined and had apparently endured it the best. He had passed one winter on "Belle Isle," where he always declared the suffering to be

most intense of any of the prisons of the Confederacy, that he had ever been in. He had annoyed the authorities there in every way he could, and had finally stolen the halyards off the flagstaff, until they had abandoned the flag business.

Humphrey was the "wag" of the mess. He was one of the Raiders against whom the South were especially bitter. They had stripped the poor fellow nearly naked when they captured him, but he had managed to secure an old army overcoat, which must supply the place of what he was lacking in coat, vest and shirt—with an old pair of pants which they had given him in exchange for his—some pieces of leather, which had originally been considered shoes, he topped off with a wad of something on his head, that was neither hat, cap or turban, but which served the purpose as well as either. The pants the "Johnnies" had left him, were worthless when he received them and the ten months service he had given them in the Confederacy had in no sense improved them except to obscure their identity. The rents as they occurred from time to time, had to be mended to keep the pants on at all, and the skirts of the overcoat had to be drawn upon to supply the patches, and this process was continued until the skirts were used up so short that it finally became a question of very nice discrimination to decide, which was most appropriate,—for the cloth to continue its service as part of the coat, or to patch the seat of the pants,—this was one of the momentous questions which the close of the war finally settled.

Humphrey had been a news-boy on the D. & H. R. R. and entered the service from their employ—after having risen I think, to the responsibility of baggage-man, and the episodes of the old railroad days were his favorite theme. He had preserved from the wreck of his lost fortune a part of an old railroad guide, —the only library of profane literature so far as I know, that the prison contained—and to settle some disputed point, that was consulted nearly every day. He thus kept in touch with his old business to which he hoped again to return if. (to use his own expression) "he wan't first et up by lice."

When the war was over and Andersonville abandoned for

, freedom, the entire camp of course turned their faces homeward and scattered to the four winds of heaven, but the separation of Alden's mess, parted a combination of as harmonious temperament, perhaps as ever assembled under one shelter. Like all the dwellers there at the close of the war, upon being liberated and finding that the war was over, each turned their faces homeward with a joy no words can express—and their "good bys" were lightly spoken as they separated.

Years later, after the struggle of life had taken definite shape and there was a moment's time to give to the old times and old faces, then it was that the effort to find the whereabouts of the old comrades, in many cases proved unavailing. The old places that had been their haunts before the war, had been filled by new men, and new methods had been adopted which often made it necessary to learn new trades, and as a result, the places that once knew them had lost all trace. It thus became a search in the dark—sometimes following a clue for years, only to find them gone and forgotten.

Sergeant Alden and myself had kept up a correspondence all through the years, but for a long time we knew nothing of the rest of them. At length we found VanBuren at Peekskill and Travis at Fishkill on the Hudson. In the late seventies, I had met an old soldier of the 2d N. J. cavalry who had told me that John Brundage had died soon after the war, of consumption, in Florida,—that accounted for all but two. A short time before the National Encampment at Boston, Alden located Humphrey at Kansas City, and we immediately made plans to meet at Boston. At the last moment Travis and VanBuren notified us that they could not join us, but Alden and myself were there and quartered at the same Hotel. Humphrey had notified us that he would be at the American house at a given time and thither we repaired to meet him. The clerk informed us that he was a guest there but was not at that moment in his room,—we accordingly took our stand together in the corridor, where we could chat while awaiting his approach. The corridor was not crowded and soon after we had taken our stand, two old soldiers came in together,

apparently looking for acquaintances, and strolled up to where we were standing to inquire if there were any men of Lincoln Post stopping there. We could give them no information as to Lincoln Post, but one of the men wore an Andersonville badge and that was sufficient introduction, and our conversation turned upon that. While we were talking, Humphrey approached, and being on the lookout for him, the recognition was mutual. When through with our greetings with Humphrey, we turned to introduce our new made acquaintance as one who had spent the winter there with us, but who we had never before met. When through with that, the stranger introduced his companion as Mr. Brundage, another of the old Andersonville men.

More than ten years before, I had been told that John Brundage had died in Florida, I knew nothing of his family—this might be a brother—I turned to the stranger and said; Your name is Brundage? "Yes" he replied, "but they called me Jersey in prison." The truth dawned upon me and I said; John Brundage! Have you come back from the grave to meet just once more with the old mess?

I was sure that I was not recognized, but I was not surprised at that for I had not been a member of his mess, but what seemed more strange, neither Alden or Humphrey seemed to me to realize whom I was addressing, and I said: "Jersey, let me introduce sergeant Alden."

The "Jersey" we had known, we had long since consigned to the grave in Florida—or so we had supposed—there was no look of the olden time in the face, and the plump rotund form of the boy we parted from in '65, was in no way visible in the middle-aged man who stood before us. Those two men, as I introduced them, clasped hands and stood looking into each others face for several seconds. What is it that kindles the eye, and lights the whole soul into being, that quickens the heart-throbs and makes the touch of hands the channel through which two souls can mingle and restore their lost identity?

Presently, the blank wonderment gave way to a dim ray of light, which was soon succeeded by another and still anoth-

er, and this was broadened into full recognition as Humphrey exclaims: "why this is 'Jersey.' "

His reported death in Florida, had proved to be false.

## CHAPTER X.

WAITING FOR THE LAST CAMPAIGN.—LEE THE CONFEDERACY'S HOPE.—THE WILSON RAID.—THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY ON A SIDE TRACK AT DANVILLE.—LEE'S SURRENDER.—LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION.—THE PAROLE.—ONCE MORE UNDER THE OLD FLAG.—THE TRANSFER TO ANNAPOLIS.—THE LAST DISAPPOINTMENT.

By some strange means—I never knew how—the Macon papers found their way into camp nearly every day and gave us something of an outline of the general operations going forward, from which we could formulate our own conclusions.

It seemed to be generally expected that the spring campaign would probably wind up what there was left of the Southern Confederacy, though I confess, I had no idea that it would crumble at the first blow that was struck, but the real weakness of the affair was made manifest to us by the fall of Savannah, and Hood's defeat at Nashville. Notwithstanding the bravado displayed in their published reports, we could see that Gen. Lee was their last and only hope, and the anxiety with which we sought for news from Richmond, can scarcely be realized. Late in March, the papers contained an account of an expedition, which had left Florence, Ala., under Gen. Wilson—cavalry, ten thousand strong—whose movements, through the meager reports, we faintly guessed, meant a raid in our direction. It was but little news that the papers contained, but that little was closely scanned. Long broken intervals of space intervened, between glimpses of that cavalry column, but each time its appearance was nearer to us. Finally, they "defeat the home guards" at Columbus Ga. and there the report stops—from that time forward, not another word about Wilson. Columbus, we knew to be

some ninety miles west of us and most likely, his course lay east—thus we reasoned. While anxiously watching for some further tidings from Gen. Wilson, among the last days of March, probably the twenty-sixth, the Macon papers, apparently with all the display type on hand, announced that Gen. Lee, moved from his works, attacked Gen. Grant's army, and swept all before him, and that henceforth there was to be an aggressive policy on the Confederate side as they had been on the defensive just as long as they proposed. The headlines that announced it carried all the assurance of positive victory, but we had already learned the absolute unreliability of their press reports, and this, was so at variance with every known fact, and was so plainly contradicted by every appearance, that we felt very sure that this affair had a sequel—we waited for that. The next paper we got, confirmed the original report, but in modified form—the tone was still exultant—no diminution of the first sweeping claim, but it gave no further particulars. To us this told its own story ; we had learned, in our experience with the army of Northern Virginia, that the operations, such as they had described, could not possibly stop where they had left them, and we further knew, that if the sequel had been favorable to them, we should hear of it.

This was followed by a general dearth of dispatches from all points—from Richmond, nothing, and the Macon editor assured his readers that, probably some of "Sherman's" raiders cut the wires and he had arranged to have his dispatches delivered by courier, from Columbia S. C. across to Washington Ga., a distance of one hundred miles. One dispatch was received through that channel, and that ended that experiment, but it brought what, to us, was news of vital importance. It was but a single paragraph, and we had to search carefully to find it, there were no gaudy head-lines as before but it was headed Richmond, and run as follows: Gen. Lee's army, after accomplishing all they designed, "have retired within their works," This conveyed to us all the information necessary, to prepare for the next announcement, which came very shortly, and carried with it, all of authority that the Confederacy had left—"Jeff. Davis' proclamation." issued

at Danville, Va., on the 4th. of April, and announced to the Confederacy as soon as they received it, and could find any paper upon which it could be printed.

In the economy of the universe, there is, in every relation of life and death, a perfect fitness of things; great thoughts find expression in sublime words and noble deeds, and these leave their impress upon the world, an inspiration to those who live after—here was the last defiance of an unworthy cause, savagely hurled at the future, from the face of old worn-out type, upon a very poor quality of cheap wall paper. In this abject manner were the prisoners informed that the Southern Confederacy was in full retreat, with its Commander-in-chief far in the lead toward Mexico.

Such a shout as arose from that camp when that was announced, those who heard it may never forget, and the radical change that followed, only those who were there can ever know. From the most loathsome place in the world, it was at once transformed into a spot which had been illuminated by a message from heaven. Between the lines of that proclamation, we read: peace! We had no desire to add to the odium with which Mr. Davis had already loaded himself, but we were disappointed, that he should at last, lack the courage to meet the results of his treason like a man, remain and share the fate of his army, and command at least, the sympathy of brave men. Although he had failed to do this, our sympathies at once went out toward his soldiers who had fought us so bravely and long—it seemed cruel to taunt them with the broken dream of a confederacy which at that moment lay on a side-track up at Danville, with their President a fugitive from any capitol, and issuing his proclamations from a “shelter tent.”

At last we knew that the end was nearing. There was a strange stillness about everything, as though the universe were holding its breath—not a rumor, the camp had been full of them all winter—now, the air, was plainly charged with great events, when,—how,—what,—where,—the future must shortly answer.

In this hushed and expectant condition, the days succeeded each other without change for more than a week. It was probably the night of the 16th. of April, near midnight, when the south gate swung back, the sergeant who had charge of the camp entered, and in language more forcible than elegant commanded, "git up, every d—d Yank." There was no delay in obeying that order. The entire camp was fallen into line, marched to the depot, and at once loaded upon cars which were standing upon the track headed north. Josh Billings once said: "he never knew laziness completely cured but he had known a second wife to hurry it up some." We here discovered that there were other things that could do it.

With an alacrity, altogether new and heretofore unknown, the trains were loaded and moved at once toward the north. We passed Fort Valley, this time without regret, knowing now, from every appearance, that we were seriously in their way and that whatever move they made, it must for us, be nearer home. We pulled into Macon, just as the sun, full-orbed, rose above the horizon, and the memory of that sunrise is one of the pictures that remain. It beamed with a new light that April morning. It shone upon a restored Union and it lighted a race made free. At Macon, we found everything in confusion, but the cause was carefully concealed—the prisoners were not allowed to alight from the train, and very soon it was announced that the entire lot, were to be run down into Florida and turned loose. The engines were turned around and coupled to the rear, and we moved back over the road we had just traversed. Andersonville, again,—run down the train,—no, we steamed past there at full speed—pulled into the yard at Albany, drew a liberal ration, and moved out on the Thomasville road to "Blue Spring," and camped for the night. "Blue Spring," was some four miles from Albany, and was one of those copious discharges, boiling up from the bowels of the earth, in a circular basin apparently without bottom, and furnishing a discharge sufficient to operate the mill below, which was of considerable size—we camped around its border, and drew water from its brink.

This was the night of April, 17th., '65, and while we were

reveling in day dreams, over the almost certain return of peace—and fighting mosquitoes, for they actually seemed more determined and relentless here than they were on the Yadkin river—a rumor reached that camp that almost stopped the beating heart, and nearly struck us dumb—"Lee had surrendered, and Lincoln,—assassinated!" Whence the rumor came, none seemed to know,—the surcharged atmosphere had at last emitted its spark. The guards knew no more about it than we, and all seemed about equally affected. Those Confederate soldiers, who for four years had only heaped abuse upon Lincoln, now seemed to realize that if the rumor was true, they had probably lost a friend. With the prisoners, the whole affair seemed strange beyond any explanation. The report about Lincoln seemed absurd—who could murder that noble man—and most were inclined to think, the wounded pride of the South had invented it, but one was as authentic as the other, and Lee's surrender, we were rather prepared to believe,—whether true or not, it was now evident that the very near future must reveal all. Little was the sleep at "Blue Spring" that night. The air was full of rumor and before morning it was quite evident that a great change had taken place from some cause. Now that we were a safe distance removed, we were told that Gen. Wilson and Howell Cobb, were arranging an armistice while we were at Macon, in accordance with instructions from Sherman and Johnson—in fact, everything now indicated collapse. The morning found us on our way toward Thomasville, where we arrived I think the fourth day, took cars, moved out to Waycross—transferred to the Live Oak R. R. and disembarked at Lake City, Fla., where we established a camp with some little order for the convenience of paroling the prisoners. J. Everett Alden and myself, with three others whose names I have forgotten, were selected to make out the parole papers, which was done in the usual form, every man signing his own parole, which required several days. There were forty-three hundred and thirty odd; as I remember, who closed their military service at our tables. When all was through, we again mounted a train headed toward Jacksonville, were drawn as

far as Baldwinville, (beyond which, the road was torn up) ordered to alight,—told that Jacksonville lay in our front and twenty-two miles distant—that by following the old railroad bed we would reach there—dismissed to our own care as the guards mounted the train to return, leaving us standing there wondering whether it was really a fact, or a dream.

There are moments that come into our lives like an unexpected sunbeam, which transforms everything. The flowers seem brighter and more fragrant, and stranger still, they now bloom for us. The song-birds warble more sweetly—they have caught our joy—and we wonder whether we still tread the same earth, beneath the same sky. If the emotions of that moment were a dream, we only knew they were pleasant and prayed to be not awakened. Jacksonville lay twenty-two miles in the distance, and for several miles we had no care, but to reach there before stopping. But the way was long to those more dead than alive, and as men began to lay down by the roadside, and find that there was one thing that even freedom could not give, we discussed the prospect of spending another night in the Confederacy. I voted unanimously, that I was not equal to the task of reaching Jacksonville that night. Gorham either had more vitality or more resolution, for he decided to try, and if he failed, he would at least, sleep no more in the Confederacy. When we were captured, we had vowed to link our fortunes while in the enemies hands, thus far we had never been separated. Now that the end had come, we resumed our individuality, Gorham went through and I spent the night on the road, only to join him about noon the following day.

It was the 28th. day of April, 1865, that I stood once more beneath the flag I had defended for four years, and the sensations of that moment were sublime. It seemed like the return to a world that I knew, from a sojourn in hell. For months I had been held a prisoner, under a political condition apparently without coherence, plan or purpose, other than to show to the world that a grave in the "last ditch," could be bravely met by men who found themselves the leaders of a "forlorn hope." Here, under the "Stars and Stripes," was order and

plenty,—behind that order, the fabric of a century's laws,—behind those laws—at this moment, as the Confederacy was about crumbling to dust—stood more than a million "loyal bayonets," and the tide still swelling.

It was sublime; it was worth a short stay in the lower regions to enjoy, if but for one moment, the emotions that blind the eye, and almost burst the heart with gratitude.

If ever a thankful pean arose to heaven from any place, it certainly sped its way from Jacksonville that April day.

Here was confirmed the death of Lincoln, and, mingled with our rejoicing over the restored Union, were tears, from eyes unused to weeping, for its most distinguished martyr. Even those of us who were inclined to draw consolation from the compensation of events, could not see how he could be spared, and here was manifest one of the divine traits of human nature. Among those returned prisoners were men who would have consented to take Lincoln's place in the grave, if but his wisdom could have been spared to the world a few more years. It was thus we mourned Lincoln as one of the rare souls which the centuries give but seldom. The instinct,—so to speak.—of those returned prisoners proved to be the soul of history.

Upon arriving at Jacksonville, the sanitary commission who had charge of the camp were issuing such rations as the cases seemed most to require, and upon that basis, the first thing offered to me, was a "pickle"—white wine vinegar. It was the first acid in any form that I had received for several months—and how delicious! But I had reason to remember that pickle for months. It seemed to destroy the mucous membrane wherever it touched. Closely following, was the issue of light rations and at once the issue of a complete outfit of clothing and the burning of everything previously worn—the issue of soap and towel—a bath in the St. John's river, and we once more resume our admiration for a clean man.

But where are the missing ones of that forty-three hundred men? There are scores, who have not yet reported, and the ambulances have been running continually. By the roadside

they found them where they sank as they reached the limit of human endurance,—upon the railroad track, where they fell and expired, with their faces still turned toward the east; while several reached Jacksonville unaided, only to die in a transport of joy, for hope had reached fruition—they had once more reached "God's country." In the excess of tenderness for the well being of all, a new danger appears. The paymaster was prepared to settle the ration account and to those with money, there was no barrier to the purchasing from the sutler whatever was wanted; many indulged their appetites at the expense of life, and seemed to rejoice even at that. I recall one poor fellow who went to the sutler, purchased a pie and ate it, then another and another, until he had eaten eight. I saw that he was not realizing the danger and ventured to remonstrate with him. "I don't care," said he, "I am going to have all I want to eat once more." He did, sat down by a tree, and probably, in an hour he was dead. He left this message for his mother: "Tell her I have had enough to eat and die happy."

We were several days at Jacksonville before transportation came. Our progress up the coast was slow, stopping at Fernandina and Hilton Head and arriving at Annapolis, Md., about the middle of May. It was now plain that the war was over and the government rapidly disbanding her armies. Here occurred the final disappointment. I learned that my regiment was still in the field, and I desired to join them. I had been mustered into the service with them in '61, had stood in their rank or file in every serious battle they had ever fought but two; I had followed their bloody trail from "Chain Bridge" to "Ream Station," and I did want, once more to clasp the hands of those brave fellows who had formed the entering wedge of that charging column which had broken the last entrenched line, Gen. Lee ever formed—return with them to the old Green Mountains to be mustered out, and finally, to help lay upon the altar of Vermont the second battle flag of the regiment—tattered but unsullied—with the devotion of an adopted son. This boon was denied me. I had looked upon the old regiment for the last time.

## EXPLANATORY LETTERS.

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DR. BENBOW.

After repeated attempts, for at least twenty years, to find some of those Union people in North Carolina, who sheltered and fed us on our escape, by writing to postmasters in different portions of the State, to Mr. Cook, Dr. Benbow and others, only to have my letters returned or unanswered, at last, I have a little light upon the matter. It comes through the kindness of my kinsman and friend, Francis J. Snow, who, on a recent business trip through the western part of the State, secured information which led to the annexed correspondence. It comes from one I most desired to hear from, and is published with his consent—it came like a dream of the past.

EAST BEND, YADKIN Co., N. C., }  
March 4, 1895. }

MR. F. J. HOSMER: My Dear Sir,—Your most welcome letter of the 1st inst. was received to-day. I was greatly rejoiced to hear from you and to learn that you were still living. I well remember the time you came to the field where my grandfather and myself were plowing, and only a few nights ago got to thinking about it and was relating the instance to my family and wondering what had become of you and whether you reached home safely. I remember your whistle, that called up your comrades. It made an impression upon me which I have never forgotten, although I am now forty-three years old. I had so often heard my father talk of the cruel war and what dangers the poor men had to undergo and what privations they endured and how he had risked his own life to save them. The troubles of the cruel war and ex-



posures he endured night and day trying to relieve the poor and sick of his country, broke his constitution and the war took nearly everything he had, for he never was known to deny any one that was needing help. He kept up and able to attend to his business until last September, when he took fever, and with other troubles it soon carried him away. The dear old mother that cooked your provisions is still living, with nine children. All are grown and married but two. How I wish you had written to him sooner, that he might have gotten it before his death, for he would have been so glad to have heard from you. But I hope, when the cares of this life are over, you may meet him where all will be peace and joy and love, for we have hopes and are confident that he has gone to rest. He was always trying to do good and help his fellow men in any way he could. I do not know of any Mr. Spencer it could be which you refer to in your letter, but if I can find out I will write you. Hoping to hear from you again, I will close. From

DR. W. E. BENBOW,  
the twelve year old boy.

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After receiving the foregoing, I wrote Dr. Benbow for further information and received the following reply:

EAST BEND, N. C., March 18, 1895.

MR. F. J. HOSMER: My Dear Sir,—Yours of the 8th came duly to hand, and its contents gave me much pleasure. I would have sent an earlier reply, but my practice kept me from home the greater part of last week, consequently I could not answer. My father's name was Evan, and I guess the family you spoke of as Spencers, must have been Pots. There was a man by the name of Spencer Pots, who had three boys, that lived about three miles southeast of this place and they left about that time. I think they are living now in Kansas, if I mistake not, but I do not know their address.

The old log cabin has been gone many years and other buildings have taken its place. I have no objection to your publishing the letter I wrote if you wish, and should like you

to send me three or four of the papers if it is not asking too much, as I have several friends who would be glad to have one. The one you sent me was read by us all with great pleasure. I remain,

Yours very truly,

W. E. BENBOW, M. D.

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I find through the kindness of the son, whose letters are here appended, that memory has led me astray in regard to his father's name. For a long time it has been fixed in my mind as "Henry Benbow." The son informs me that it is "Evan," instead. But whatever the Christian name, I have always remembered Dr. Benbow as one of the noble souls I had met in the old north State, whose services for the Union were more unselfish than mine, because unknown to the government, and unrequited.

The letter informs me that he died last autumn. Thus is banished the last hope of meeting my benefactor on earth. In that fadeless realm, where true and unselfish manhood meets its crowning—Evan Benbow must be there.

Spencer Pots! Here again the years have left their oblivious footsteps. This time it was the surname that I had lost. The man was familiarly called "Spencer," by the Doctor and all of his acquaintances, and that was all that memory had retained. I recall it now distinctly, however, and rejoice to think that probably, Kansas holds my long lost fellow traveller. It was to some such land of peace and plenty that he hoped at last to arrive, and this information leads me to the conclusion that they were more fortunate than we, and succeeded in eluding the sentinels on the mountains, and made their way through. I shall now have a new interest in Kansas, though I can hardly see at this time, how to find them.

Thus ends the simple story of one of the adventures of an humble soldier in the cause of the Union, which, through the courtesy of Comrade Hall of the GAZETTE, has now been told entire, for the first time even to my own family. If it shall help to warm the patriotism of a single young man, upon whose valor the defence of the flag may yet depend, it has not been in vain.



## **LETTERS FROM THE OLD BATTLE-FIELDS.**

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**A FEEBLE EXPRESSION OF THE MEMORIES WHICH CLUSTER AROUND  
THE SACRED SPOTS AFTER TWENTY YEARS.**

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**BY FRANCIS J. HOSMER.**

**WASHINGTON D. C. March 24th, 1883.**

I wonder if the old "GAZETTE" has a single reader who would be interested in the reminiscences of a member of the "Army of the Potomac," who took his first degree at "Chain Bridge" and received his diploma at "Appomattox," and whose memory has never been refreshed by contact with these familiar scenes until now. Standing in the shadow of twenty years, and casting my eyes to the northward, in fancy, I see again the pulsations of the great loyal heart; I seem to see the air of winter, radiant with bloom, and the calyx of that flower is a flag-staff, and the petals, the emblem of liberty; I see the gathering muscle of the North—I hear the farewells, and the scene changes. I am standing upon the identical spot I stood twenty-two years ago, when, tenderly lifting a blanket, I beheld for the first time the real significance of war. Cold beneath the covering, pierced by six minnie bullets, lay a defender of the old flag. The old shudder comes over me and I turn away to avoid the contagion of unwelcome memories.

The spot is "Chain Bridge," where I first trod the "sacred soil of old Virginia," and as I gaze about me, I stand beneath the weight of its memories, timid as a child; yes, as

when, twenty-two years ago, imagination's most vivid effort could paint no suffering, this spot did not then foretell. I did not know what war was then, consequently could not know that the picture was worse than the fact, and so stood trembling beneath a weight of apprehensions which memory insists upon renewing to-day, and as I scan the long, tortuous, bloody path from here to Appomattox, it is with a vague feeling of wonder that I ever saw the end.

Standing upon the hill beyond the bridge, may yet be traced the outlines of the old forts, "Ethan Allen and Marcy," whose bulwarks were the first shelter from bullets we ever sought. It would not seem as it did then, to buckle on the harness, shoulder a rifle, and march to her imperiled front to defend her. The experience of the years that followed, left comparatively little to be feared in a position of that kind. It was well that we were ignorant of what lay before us. The Rodman guns no longer guard the embrasures—the ruthless foot-steps of time have obliterated the angles, and the turf cushions the hill-top as of old. Little remains to distinguish the spot where once centered the interest of a nation. During the stormy times that followed the acts of secession in '61, when the fate of Washington seemed trembling in the balance, the importance of this place as compared with to-day, presents a very strange contrast. I have no hope of being able to express the emotions of one who is sure he was here then, but is not sure he is here now. Certainly I am not all here as then. The combined and all-pervading enthusiasm of soldierhood is wanting, and the utter insignificance of Chain Bridge to-day, excites a wonder whether I am mistaken in the place, or the place in me. Imagine an old soldier, whose last appearance here was during the period of its most vital importance, when the entire surroundings as far as the eye could reach, "bristled with bayonets" and on every eminence floated the guidon of some battery, leisurely strolling across the bridge smoking a cigar, with no sentinel to demand—"Your pass, Sir," and no molestation or abridgment of the most perfect freedom—except a sign on the bridge which has a familiar appearance—"two dollars fine, &c."—

then, a pass signed by the general commanding, and countersigned by every subordinate officer, was scrutinized and examined with the most relentless rigor, and if the poor fellow who presented it was able to pass—it seemed to be, not on the merits of the paper, but by the exercise of that virtue which allows the benefit of a doubt. Then, an undisputed passage of this bridge meant something—possibly the nation's life—but the nation guarded it and have rebuilt the bridge, and the men who defended its approaches in '61, as they journey hither to renew old memories, can never forget that it was once a place of importance.

Langley's! Has that name a familiar sound? Should this chance to meet the eye of one who spent the winter at "Camp Griffin," they will surely recognize the little old hotel at the top of the knoll, near where the barber-shop was and where the Lewinsville road leaves the Leesburg pike. Well, the old hotel has evidently been whitewashed since then, but the shingles are moss-covered and seem to say, "we saw the contending armies." The same little old sign swings and creaks upon its rusty hinges, inviting the traveler to the same indifferent entertainment. The old barber-shop is gone, like many of its old patrons, and no reminder is left but the intersection of the roads which circumscribed its bounds. The addition of quite a number of new dwellings gives Langley an appearance of more importance than fancy had painted, and Langley with its soldiers gone, seems trying to maintain favorable remembrance by the exercise of a little thrift. There is quite a sprinkling of Northern men who have lent their methods and material resources to the brightening of this section, and have given it something of a Northern appearance. Strange how that drives away the lonesome feeling—it speaks of a similarity of tastes—it tells of a kindred people.

"Tenting to-night on the old camp ground." Camp Griffin, where, according to "Greeley, the finest army in the world was organized, and where the "On to Richmond" was so valiantly responded to—twenty-one years ago this very time—that even the wooden guns and mounted stovepipe of Centerville, failed to turn us back; though in candor, perhaps I

ought to say, there was not a Confederate soldier there to man even them, otherwise the result might have been different.

Upon reaching the old camp ground, the first impression that assumes definite form, is the absence of the "orchestra" and the quiet that reigns on the spot where the mule train used to be parked. There is more brush than mules there now and the ration call has been dispensed with. An occasional scrap of harness which has survived the sunshine and storm, mutely tells the story of the past; and the hill-top brightens under the rays of the setting sun, as it did when Hancock's brigade flag waved from its crest. I actually feel lost on the old camp ground—I can't locate the spring that slaked our thirst, nor the spot where waved the Vermont brigade flag. The only spot that wore these features then, is the old drill ground, which has evidently yielded its annual tribute of corn ever since the "iron heel" was removed. The exact piece of turf which furnished me with the only feathers my bed contained through a siege of measles and typhoid fever, refuses to be identified. I thought then, if there was one spot in the wide world indelibly fixed in memory—that was the one,—but it has been lost beneath the plowshare these many years, and the tear-drop which unbidden starts, must fall upon unresponsive soil.

I search in vain for the spot where we left Stratton, Bailey, Farnham and several others of our company when we moved on to Richmond, and are told that loyal hands, long since removed them, that they might burst the chrysalis of oblivion, and live anew and forever at Arlington.

Back to Washington via Lewinsville and Falls Church. The mud is just about as deep and as much inclined to move along with me as it was twenty-one years ago yesterday—with perhaps this difference, the travel is lighter, and the load heavier, for there are less to help carry it. The catechism is not repeated as often, and no one suggests that these fences would burn well but the road is, as then. Falls Church has grown a little, and the old church seems to be the only building neglected in the village. That looks much as it did

when we sought shelter beneath its roof, and its walls resounded to the melody of company "I's" quartette. The colored people have built two churches there since the war, and that, I think, makes five, and from the appearance, I should think the village had a population of perhaps one hundred and fifty souls.

I returned to the city by way of the "Acqueduct bridge," which carried me across the old R. E. Lee estate, through the National Cemetery. The old mansion, is the office of the superintendent, and it was there that I sought the resting place of those I knew. The melancholy magnificence, the subdued grandeur, and the touching sadness of this place, has been so often, and so much better pictured than I could do it, that I trust you will excuse me. I can see no use for language here. Life has some emotions that words can never reach—some thoughts, so far removed from the mortal, that the immortal only, can voice them. Do the lips move? It must be, but to utter words which still binds one to earth. Does the tear-drop well up to the eyelid? It is but to fall, perchance, on an "unknown" grave. Yet, a little stone marks the spot, where, in eternal quiet, reposes the ashes of one, who, for his country's sake, gave his all—even his identity.

I can only be silent at Arlington.

Washington! What can I say of that? I think of nothing except, I have changed my hotel. Formerly I stopped at the large hotel near the Baltimore and Ohio depot—the largest in town. It would accomodate about five thousand guests—rooms all on the first floor, and the size of the room depended upon the number of guests—meals always regular—no waiters to fee, and no extras charged.

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RICHMOND VA. March 26th, 1883.

Once more in the old "Confederate capital." Many efforts I made to reach here twenty years ago, but the railroads were in bad condition then, and the passengers who succeeded in reaching here, did it only through a method then in vogue,

of changing "conductors." Our party was no exception to the rule, and our change occurred at Petersburg. We had a pass for any point in the Confederacy, that we found it necessary to go, and an escort to accompany us. We were encumbered with attentions, which, not altogether calculated to enhance the pleasures of the trip, were no less attentions.

The drawing room coaches that composed the entire train, are sometimes vulgarly called "box cars," but our train must have had the absolute "right of way," for we all felt that we had reached Richmond "ahead of time." We were at once quartered at the old "Libby" hotel, whose twelve thousand guests seemed not to tax the limits of her capacity. It was an intolerably poor hotel, and as I visit her to-day, and find her occupied as a guano factory, I am reminded that the odors are not very much changed,

I shall never forget the smile of contempt that wreathed the lips of Richmond's fair daughters as we marched up from the depot. It might have been our blue clothes and "nothing more," for, as I meet them to-day, there is a merry twinkle in their eyes, and a knowing look, which seems to say—"You have been here before." There is now, no one to interfere with me as I examine their statue of "Old Stonewall," (presented by friends in England) and admire the crowning pride of their city—Washington's monument. Twenty years ago, their soil was too sacred for vandal footsteps—their works of art, too holy for plebian eyes. Now they welcome both.

What shall I say of Richmond to-day? It is one of the most beautiful cities in this country. I am not surprised that her sons stood like a wall of adamant around her. They had convinced themselves that she would look better under a new flag, than the old, and so thinking, many gave their lives to nourish an exotic, without first definitely locating the thermal line. The illusion is past—the vision broadened, and secession is cured. The problems of the war are by no means settled, but I fancy Mahone's political movement will eventually appear, as the entering wedge of the final solution in Virginia. I meet here many old Confederate soldiers and the greeting from them is warm and hearty—they, at least, have

buried the hatchet. The animosities of the past are gone, and the events that led to the war, discussed with as much coolness as though the disputants had no interest in the result.

I am convinced that the "Old Dominion" have a large class of people, as loyal as any in Massachusetts, and the influence of that class must be felt for they are the most intelligent of that generation which gave to the South her army. There is an influence here that reminds me of the olden time. I find it among the young men who were children then, and who drew from their mother's breast the vivid influence of those terrible times. These young men can never forget—their children will never remember.

I suppose I met at Ford's hotel, the man who administered to the old Vermont brigade its "baptism of fire." His name is J. H. Sans, and he commanded the battery at Young's mill. Do I hear you ask where that may be? If you had the good fortune to belong to the army of the Potomac, and went with them on the peninsular campaign, you certainly cannot have forgotten the very important event of the first day's march after leaving Newport News, when, about three o'clock p. m. we were brought face to face with a formidable looking earth-work, which defied all further progress. You will undoubtedly remember the line-of-battle that was formed to charge that Fort, which we found bastioned, escarp'd, abatised, and—evacuated. Do you remember how its size and importance diminished as we found it defenceless, and the hearty commendations passed upon the judgment of the "Johnnies" in thus early, adopting the tactics of "David Crocket's Coon?" It is entirely unnecessary to state here that subsequent events made this move, on the part of the Confederates, perfectly plain, but I only proposed to tell you of Captain Sans, who it was that commanded that Fort, and who was responsible for all the carnage of that day. (That word carnage, sounds just as large as though some one had been hit.) Although there stands at Yorktown, the ruins of an old fort that bore his name, he tells me he has not visited the place since the war; in fact he strives to evade all reminder of those old times, and thinks only of peace—while giving to Virginia his most loyal support

and most manly effort. It was not until the government at Washington decided to compel South Carolina to obey the laws, that he, and those like him, made common cause with their State. That strange fealty to the State, which is the legitimate fruit of the old feudal system, had received no lessons from the teachings of modern civilization; and so, many of these men cast in their all, to perpetuate the old, not knowing that the new was better. They see their mistake now, and while deplored the cost of the tuition, admit that the school was good.

I found my old quarters at Libby Prison, with perfect ease, for scarcely a feature of the external appearance is changed. The present occupant, J. Hayden Gillem, tells me, not a day passes, but brings some wanderer to this shrine, some pilgrim whose prayers from this altar, no heaven reached, to inspect, under favorable circumstances, this old building which for so many years had stood, like a black indelible line across the pathway of their lives. I was the twentieth one registered as sight seers on that day, and while there, five others came, and thus it is from day to day to such an extent that Mr. Gillem keeps a boy whose business it is, to attend to them. The boy, who has learned his lesson from the numerous visitors, first leads you to the door, now unhinged and preserved only as a tablet, which bears the inscription of many a name, perchance alone preserved here and for which Mr. G. had been offered five hundred dollars; then you are shown the checker-board marked upon the floor, and lastly, the place where Captain Straight and his party sought freedom through the chimney. In vain I ask the lad to show me Hogan's old cell. He looks at me in blank surprise as he informs me that Libby Prison had no cells, and he had never heard of Martin E. Hogan. Again I ask, "Has no one ever mentioned that name to you? Is it possible that no one has inquired what become of the scout who hung the negro, was captured on the Dahlgren raid, sentenced to be shot as a spy, and after seven months in one of the basement cells, transferred to Salisbury in chains?" As I notice the blank astonishment as he turns away, I can but think, how little of the story of Libby, its

present occupant knows. How many will recall, at the mention of the name, the spot where they submitted their first letter for Confederate inspection, and what an effort it cost them to comply with the prison rules—that no letter would go north that contained any reflection upon the prison management or the chivalry of its managers. How many will recall the hopes they built upon Captain Turner's promise, to restore to them upon their exchange, the valuables he was compelling them to surrender, and the strange devices for secreting the same, when ordered to disrobe for the search. Who that saw her portals close behind them for other prisons, but did so with a vague feeling of unrest, lest the new be even worse than the old—and who that closed their tired eye-lids there, for the final rest, but welcomed deliverance even thus. It was well that the boy did not know 'it all. Before entering the building, I strolled down to the canal front to locate a certain bullet hole in the casing, and while there, was accosted by a colored man who asks; "Massa was yo dar?" Being answered in the affirmative, he adds "Lor', I sees heeps on 'em—t'other day gemman come 'long—look roun' spell—done, gin right up, sot down an' cried—mus' been orful." With Ethiopia's benediction I left the spot hallowed by so many unpleasant memories.

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FREDERICKSBURG, VA.,  
Sunday, March 25th, 1883.

More than a century ago in his journey to the Hebrides, Dr. Johnson closed his reference to the isle of Icolmkill with these words :

"To abstract the mind from local emotions would be foolish if possible, would be impossible if attempted. Whatever withdraws us from ourselves, whatever makes the past, the distant or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me, be that frigid philosophy, which could conduct one unmoved, over ground once dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That

man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."

While I have no hope of maintaining Dr. Johnson's standard of eloquent description, I crave indulgence for a few moments while I attempt to express the emotions of one who stood in battle-line on this ground twenty years ago, and who never before realized the "poverty of language." If the plains of Marathon and the pass of Thermopylae are to the old world the inspiration of patriotism, to the old sixth corps the heights of Fredericksburg has become the theme—and though Salem Church may fail in its effort to warm the piety of the devout, yet there the sacred fire of liberty can never die.

The race whose freedom was submitted to the arbitration of the sword, and who watched with eager eyes the dawning of liberty's sun will, through generations yet unborn, as they stand upon these hills, tell their children that the defenders of the Union who died there, helped to pay the tribute that ransomed them. Here the story of the bondman's wrongs was read amid the glare of bursting shells, upon burnished blades—and here, beneath the soil they anointed, they sleep beneath the flag they defended. The Government will guard with tender care, this cemetery, the perpetual fount of their inspiration, and the day will never dawn which shall overshadow them in forgetfulness.

Twenty years! The Parrot guns are gone from Stafford Heights, and the heavy Rodman's and howitzers from Falmouth. The artillery has been parked and voiceless these many years. The rifle-pits are empty, and have nearly settled to their original level; like many of their defenders, some of them are lost to memory even. The old redoubt which the second division, sixth corps erected still marks the spot on which I stood to watch the deployment of the 10th Massachusetts, under the fire of sharpshooters, where one of Millers Falls' loyal sons earned his pension. My friend would not know the spot he christened with his blood twenty years ago. But the hedge that sheltered the "Johnnie," is deep run still

Twenty years! The old Bernard ruins remain nearly as we left them, but the old chimneys are gone. The only landmarks in that vicinity, are the two oaken gate posts near the road. They now, mark no entrance to a hospitable Southern home, for the house was destroyed. They no longer bid the stranger enter, for they are just as well off outside; but they stand there in silent eloquence as they stood more than twenty years ago when the Vermont brigade fought beneath their shadow.

Twenty years! The sun shines as brightly as then, and the grass is greening the hillside but vandal hands have felled the woods where Meade and Gibbons' divisions fought and fell under Burnside, and removed the stone wall which sheltered the slayers of Meagher's brigade on that terrible December day. The battered walls of the river front have been repaired or removed and left few of the old scars visible.

I am stopping at the old Exchange Hotel, the general hospital all through those bloody times. In the midst of one of Landlord Luck's best dinners, this recollection came over me. I found it convenient to close my repast, return the half raised morsel to my plate and retire to some spot where I might muse upon the mournful remembrance alone. Here it must have been that Lillie, Amidon, Twitchell, Foster, Ensorth and thousands of others, groaned beneath the scalpel. The tribute which the wounded soldier paid at this shrine was usually so many pounds of flesh, and many, resigned their breath beside. Could the veil be lifted, what a story might be told.

The old Chancellorsville plank road to Salem Church is the most natural part of the town to me. The tannery has apparently suffered no change since the wounded of Newton's division were sheltered beneath its west front. The old Marye residence, which gave to the heights their name, stands in cold magnificence as then, while on the ridge east, where the second division of the sixth corps broke through and captured part of the Washington artillery, now floats the emblem of the Union over the National cemetery. Little did I dream,

when, amid the hurry of the charge. I caught a wild violet from its stem to send as a souvenir to my mother, that down through the vista of twenty years, I should stand here to see them springing afresh, to bloom above the Nation's dead.

I reached Salem Church this time. On my previous visit, on May 3d, '63, I changed my mind before reaching there, took the first left hand road, concluded that I did not care to go there, in fact, I did not know there was a church there—and after prospecting in that vicinity until the next evening, quietly returned to the north bank of the river in the cool of the evening, by the way of Bank's Ford, as I had no further business then, at Fredericksburg. Well, the cherry tree is gone. The gate house still shelters its occupants as then, and the shot scarred walls of the old church echoes the weekly prayers of the devout. The strife that reigned without twenty years ago, seems not to have disturbed the quiet that reigns within. Like the sacred walls of the Pantheon, calm, cold and motionless, from more than a hundred lips, these walls tell their dual story. To the South, it tells of the cause they lost—while the colored man, as he pilots the visitor hither, reads with glistening eyes, a chapter in the story of his freedom, and at the national cemetery reverently points out the spot where these fallen ones are at rest.

Standing upon Marye's Hights, I can easily trace the path of the old regiment in the charge of May 3d, '63, from the old stage road where we formed, across the railroad, over Hazel Run and up past the brick house. Could I picture the dreams of childhood, could I but paint a heaven where bliss knew no desire, I might attempt to express the rapture of the old regiment when we reached this spot.

Here another link was broken  
That had welded slavery's chain ;  
Here had freedom left her footprints  
Which through ages shall remain.

Here undying stand before me  
Visions of that shadowy band,  
Gladly piling freedoms altar  
With the noblest in the land ;

Still repeating the old offer  
 Made when first began the strife;  
 Wreath me still, old flag, and dying,  
 I will give to thee, new life.

Twenty years the grass has greened and faded above the forms who fell here, and to-day the creeping vines and wild violets are springing afresh, like sad poems of remembrance from the life they gave. On other and kindlier soil repose the larger part of those who survived that day; while the few who journey hither to take a farewell view of the old heights, gaze with a strange unnatural feeling that quiet reigns and no alien flag waves from her crest.

On these ensanguined heights, overlooking the valley below and awaiting the final roll-call, are nearly sixteen thousand Union soldiers, keeping watch and ward over this historic old town.

Quaint old Fredericksburg, with her dingy streets and cheerless dwellings, with her chivalry and her sloth—still maintains her position on the map of the “Old Dominion,” and her memory of the good old days ‘befo’ de wah.” Her refugees have returned and a new generation has largely succeeded to the paternal estates. Her dwellings are no longer needed for hospitals and the camp-fires that blazed in her streets and brightened her hillsides are dead—God grant forever. The banners under which her sons fought so bravely and well are reverently folded from sight, and the lost cause buried in the graves of its defenders. Do you wonder that she mourns and refuses to be comforted? Reverently I uncover in the presence of her sorrow. This at least she has for comfort—kindred tears may water kindred graves. Could many a Northern home enjoy but this poor boon, the war were bereft its sharpest pang. Scanning the path of the old regiment in that charge may be traced almost the spot where Sam, Charlie Orville and Marsh, each fell;

All battling in the strife, each manly gave their life  
 Ere our flag upon the heights their eyes had seen;  
 Each sleep beneath the sod they had hallowed with their blood  
 Unmarked—heaven kindly keeps the mantling verdure green.

Heroes, from that shadowy realm I hail thee. In the name  
of all the heart-strings broken, and homes made desolate—of  
all the blighted hopes and weary lives, of that patient waiting  
for footsteps, which can only “tinkle on the tufted floor”—in  
the name of that fondness which still pictures thy coming in  
dreams—hail and farewell!

Sleep thou, in freedoms cloistered cell,  
Sleep on and rest, nor break the spell  
Which round this sacred spot shall dwell—  
Forever.



## **MEMORIAL ADDRESS.**

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**DELIVERED BEFORE HOOKER POST MAY 30, 1887.**

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**BY FRANCIS J. HOSMER.**

At the base of one of the spurs of the Pindus, where it slopes toward the Ionian Sea and near the pass of Thermopylae, stands a monument upon which is inscribed this legend: "Oh! Stranger—tell it at Lacedaemon, that we died here in obedience to her laws." And at Lacedaemon, the traveller is told that near this spot, the brave king Leonidas, with a little band of three hundred Spartans, withstood the whole Persian army. Heroically they had walled the gap, until the last arm was defenceless; and Lacedaemon, justly proud of such defenders, erected this monument, upon which was placed the inscription, written by Simonides of old.

This was nearly twenty-four hundred years ago, and there, in far off Asia, the fire of patriotism burned as brightly as today. This is but one of the many incidents of which the history of the past is crowded, which shows that the love of country has been a prevailing sentiment, wherever civilized man has made a home. It is not strange that it is so—it is so because we are human. We become attached to the place of our birth first, because our dawning consciousness finds there the lives inwoven with our own; secondly, because it is the embodiment of that training and education which makes us an integral part of that community; and lastly, because it contains the relics and mementoes of our ancestors, and the graves in which they sleep.

There is a hidden spring 'tis said, that nestles in each heart  
 Which gushes with the memory that home alone imparts,  
 There is a fire in every soul, celestial, warm and bright,  
 Which burns for father-land and home, for God and  
 human right.

This fire has been the guiding star, this spring has been  
 the stay ;  
 Of untold throngs in freedom's cause, who sleep unwept  
 to-day—

Who fill the graves of other times and other lands than ours,  
 Have been caressed by other tears and embosomed  
 other flowers.

How strangely cruel, we to-day employ life's fleeting span,  
 The same cold, cruel work goes on, man still may  
 murder man ;

While we of all God's favored ones, by justice feel upborne,  
 Man's inhumanity to man, we meet to-day to mourn.

From the diversity of human thoughts and interests and the  
 imperfection of human judgment, every great question is al-  
 most certain to have its advocates and opponents.

As good and evil can only be measured or defined by com-  
 parison, so right and wrong, lain upon the scales of human  
 frailty, will often find their equipoise disturbed by selfishness  
 or their accuracy destroyed by envy or malice. If this propo-  
 sition be true, it would therefore seem reasonable to assume  
 that the factor we call conscience, may become liable to en-  
 list upon either side of a controversy, in proportion as its light  
 or interest may appear. This may seem strange, but I am  
 convinced that it is true and to my mind the history of the  
 past confirms it. Let us consider a few notable examples.

When Martin Luther was summoned to appear before a  
 Papal tribunal at Rome to answer to a charge of heresy ; he  
 had nailed his ninety-five theses to the gate of the little  
 church at Wirtemberg and announced that he was prepared  
 to defend them in the name of God.

When Jean Calas lay stretched upon the rack of torture,  
 on the public square of Toulouse, the faith that sustained him

n that terrible hour, forbade his kissing the crucifix which was pressed to his dying lips.

When "Peter the Hermit" raised the first crusade which made its way toward Palestine, with those who reached there later, the cross of Christ, met in mortal combat, the crescent of Allah, beneath the walls of Jerusalem.

Probably no more devoutly conscientious man ever lived than Cotton Mather. A graduate of Harvard at sixteen, brilliant beyond his years and his time—austerely devout. Yet Salem to her latest generation can never forget that it was his fanaticism that instigated, his cruelty that sanctioned the execution of her twenty-eight citizens for witchcraft.

And now to summarize and bring the comparison within the memory of the present generation—during the war of the rebellion, when the entire loyal North were on their knees imploring divine assistance in a just cause; does it seem strange to be told that it was a custom with "Stonewall Jackson," in some respects the ablest general the South ever had, upon the eve of a battle, to dismount at the head of his column, kneel by the roadside and invoke the guidance of that same just God? These are strange inconsistencies, but here they are and they are facts. Standing in the full light of these facts, is it strange that the philosopher finds himself on all sides beset with inconsistencies, until, turning from them all to that omnific presence whence all is known, asks:

What is truth, when men so differ,  
What the justice for which men pray  
That each may foil his erring neighbor,  
While both are traveling God's highway.

What is justice, asks the master,  
When force despoils me of my own;  
What is justice sighs the bondmen,  
Cradles robbed and heart-strings torn.

Hear ye Southerners, hear ye Northmen  
Justice in its noblest part,  
Can be found alone in kindness,  
By the generous, loving heart.

When love's mantle gently spreading,  
Shall envelop all the throng;  
Then shall justice shout to heaven,  
In one grand, triumphant song.

To quote a few lines from Victor Hugo; "brutality in the form of progress is called revolution, but when it is ended this fact is recognized—the human family have been chastised but they have moved forward." Of the chastisement which has brought the human family into the glorious atmosphere of to-day, the ages past have contributed their full share—while of the present generation it may perhaps be said with truth, they did their duty as duty appeared to them.

In 1861, the men of the South and the men of the North sprang to arms. The men of the South to maintain the supremacy of the State. The men of the North, to defend and perpetuate the sovereignty of the Union.

Of the causes which led to this desperate and uncompromising condition of the public mind, time is too short to touch upon to-day. The history of the future will find in it, simply the same elements of antagonism which have always appeared when two widely differing forms of civilization have been brought into immediate contact, and the consciousness of right will probably be found to have been as prominent factor on the part of the defenders of the State, as the defenders of the Union—for men never have fought as the people of the South fought, for glory or for gold. What, then, you ask, were the factors in this problem, which could be demonstrated only in blood. To my mind they are simple and in stating them I hope to show the enormous responsibility which rests upon the thinkers who formulate plans of public policy, for it is to the influence of a single man that the war of the rebellion can be plainly traced.

The people of the South had reasoned from wrong premises, up to their logical conclusions. Granted, the right to hold human slaves, the right to perpetuate and extend slavery follows as a natural sequence. But, say the people of the North, your premises are wrong—they are based upon the

abstract right to hold human slaves and if you insist upon building on that foundation, you court the enmity of mankind by being the oppressors of the weak. Haughtily they reply; the fathers who had the courage to deliver the Colonies and the wisdom to frame the Constitution under which we live, laid slavery as the corner stone, and there it shall remain—or perish all. They staked their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor upon the issue, and the bayonet alone convinced them they were wrong. But there was a vast difference between the soldiers of the North and the soldiers of the South. The soldier of the South, if he chanced to be a South Carolinian, and were called upon to do battle in Virginia—consented to it only when South Carolina placed him there. If he were a Virginian and were called upon to face the armies of the west, resolutely he responded because there he could better defend Virginia. Each State, if I except North Carolina, seemed to regard with a feeling of superiority, her own institutions, her own men. No aspirations were allowed to reach beyond the limits of the parent State.

While the Northern soldier seemed scarcely to know or care, whether his State had a boundary line or not:

If the hills of Vermont were the home of his childhood,  
 And her valleys and rivers the sport of his youth;  
 As the Maple and Fir was the charm of her wildwood.  
 The charm of her manhood, was courage and truth.  
  
 But they lov'd not Vermont alone for her glory,  
 They lov'd her bright hills and her heroes of State,  
 But they lov'd her the more for her loyal devotion  
 To America's flag—undivided and great.  
  
 The breezes that swept o'er her timber-capped mountains,  
 And toyed with the flag of his forefathers there,  
 Must sweep to the Gulf, un vexed by commotion  
 And bear on its breast freedom's emblem e'en there.  
  
 As the slant rays of sunlight that greeted the morning  
 Fell soft on her folds from the distance afar.  
 So he knew at the evening, away to the westward  
 Those folds were caressed by the bright evening star.

At the mention of Stark or of Ethan Allen, the Northern soldier recalled only that conflict in which a Virginian led the Colonies to victory. While he was proud of his own heroes he loved no less, his Washington, his Marion, his Green, and his Gates. But what was greater and grander and more glorious than all else—the Northern soldier loved humanity, and humanity knows no State.

But, we have gathered, during this month of wild flowers and on this day of budding roses, to pluck the choicest blossoms, wreath them into the tenderest and most expressive symbols, and lay them lovingly where they may be kissed by the dew-drops that moisten our loved ones graves. Of the innumerable throngs who assemble throughout our broad land to observe this memorial service—while it may attract the idle and the curious, yet here as always, may be traced the four principal classes of mourners. Those who gave to the Union their sons—those who gave their husbands—those who gave their fathers, and those who gave their comrades.

The mother who yet lives, as she fashions her offering to be borne by younger hands and placed above the bosom of her boy, will if she be familiar with the language of the flowers she uses, select as the ground-work of her wreath, a circle of lilies, for she sees naught but purity there. The widow has inwoven with the purity of the lily, the delicate sentiments of the forget-me-not—it speaks her devotion. The orphan, now grown to manhood, adds to all these the loves of all the roses, for in them is reverence—while the comrade who drops all these, turns away in sadness, that no flower that has ever gladdened this beautiful earth, has expessed the high companionship of men. Not that it was higher or holier—it differed in kind. It had something of the mother-love, without her tenderness, something of the wife's without her fondness, it had the orphans sorrow, without their anguish.

In paying this tribute, the aged and the young engage and none are forgotten to-day. You have perfumed with flowers the zephyrs which play above the beds of those who repose here, you have scattered in generous profusion, mementoes sacred to the memory of those who sleep—there.

The subtle influence of this service, while it strengthens our resolves and brightens our sorrows, we feel in some mysterious way sweetens their repose, for there is a beautiful belief that the intangible cord that binds life to life, is never broken—that the wheels of time, silently “cog with those of eternity.”

We bring to the discharge of this duty, something of gladness—something of sadness. Washington Irving has said; “the sorrow for the dead is the only one for which we refuse to be comforted,” yet these very graves have come to be places of peace, almost of joy. The friends as they gather round each lowly grave, seem to read in the ambient air, the silent story of each heart. The all-pervading influence which seems born of angel presence, seems to tell the mother as she mourns, with never dying devotion her early departed, long lost son, that in him, her Country has found a patriot, and, mingled with her Country’s gratitude, is her gladness. The widow seems to read through her tears, a new character of him whose grave she adorns with the myrtle, altogether unknown to her in their happier days. Ascending with the perfume of the flowers, and rising above his love for her and his fondness for their children—she sees the manly determination to leave to her and to them, unsullied, the heritage of freedom his fathers gave. There was no place for him at her side, consistent with his sense of duty to the future. Measuring by this metewand, he sleeps to-day, perchance in an unknown grave. Yet, wherever he sleeps, whether beneath the kindly soil of the family lot, with his name and fame graven on the mossy marble—or within the sanctuary of a National cemetery—or in the forgotten furrow of some old field—the heritage he left is safe, for his children will defend it—the Union he helped preserve is strong, for his blood helped cement it, while the old flag that he followed till death—guards alike now, the “Blue and the Gray.”

The orphaned son renews from year to year, at his father’s grave, his ideal type of manhood. Mingled with his bereavement at the loss of a parent, is the renewed determination to prove a worthy son. When dangers beset him, or the prospect of death o’ershadows—a firm reliance to him will be the remembrance, that his father faced both, manfully.

' And now, comrades—you who pursued the contest to its close,—you who formed the bulwark of defence, until defence was unresisted,—you who stood like the "angel at the gate" with the flaming two-edge sword—you have been permitted to return to the embrace of loving hearts. You can, already see, some blessings your effort helped to win. You have lived to see the slave you helped to free, embrace that freedom with a zest that liberty alone can give. You have seen that freedom is as dear beneath the black, as the white skin, that the cabin of the one may be as holy as the palace of the other, that circumstances of birth or education, do not circumscribe the gifts of God, and to know that the sunlight of the future shall never again in this country, gild the trappings of a master, or mock the poverty of a slave.

The years are rolling on; and this little band of faithful men are rapidly nearing the close of earth's service. The final roll-call, shortly awaits us all. One by one, as we march on, we pass them, where they sank by the roadside,—with their burden for a pillow—they sleep well. We pause a moment, to close the tired eye-lid—to fold the weary hands—to lay a flower on their grave. This will be the special service of each surviving comrade until the last one is called,—and when the last name shall be called, let us hope that a generous people will do for our sake, that which we do to-day.

When, to-morrow, this old Life-guard  
 Strike their camp, the last on earth  
 And, awaken to the pulsing  
 Of a new and nobler birth,  
  
 When the canteens which they carried  
 Through the long continued strife,  
 Shall be filled with purer water,  
 At the fountain head of life,  
  
 When the haversack—long empty,  
 Shall be filled for aye, again,  
 With the manna that is springing  
 On the bright celestial plain;

When the bayonet shall moulder,  
When the amaranth shall wave,  
And the mourners of the future  
Deck no more, war's new-made graves—  
  
When the knapsack shall be folded  
To embrace the pillow'd head  
Of the last of the old army  
Who shall seek his final bed.  
  
And he's sleeping 'neath the willows;  
Faults—for freedom's sake, forgot;  
Liberty will plant and nourish,  
Freedom's bright forget-me-nots.





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